MONTALTO:

A Tragedy,

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS IT WAS WRITTEN PREVIOUS TO THE ALTERATIONS THAT WERE MADE ON ITS LATE REPRESENTATION AT

The Theatre-Royal, Drury-Lane.

LONDON:

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PREFACE.

MONTALTO is here presented to the public, as it was offered to the Managers of Drury Lane, not as it was subsequently represented.

The Author has been induced to print it as it was originally written, for two reasons—First, because, in order to render the sense clear in the perusal, it is necessary that much should be expressed, which the action of the Performers supplies with greater effect in representation.—Secondly, because he had nothing to do with the alterations and curtailments of the Piece.

The truth is, that this Tragedy was written at a very early period of life and never intended for representation. It remained unnoticed amongst other juvenile productions, 'till the success which attended some Tragedies lately performed, induced the Author to offer it to the Theatre. The Play was sent home from abroad for this purpose, and accepted by the Managers of Drury Lane, to whom it was abandoned for curtailment, or even alteration, according to their pleasure.

The Play appears to have been acted for several nights with considerable applause, for which it was much indebted to the admirable acting of the several Performers. The highest praise, he understands, is due to Mr. WALLACK, Mr. COOPER, Mr. BOOTH, Mrs. WEST, and Mrs. EGERTON. The Author takes this opportunity of offering them his acknowledgments and thanks.

February 19*th*, 1821.

MONTALTO.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

COUNT BASSANO,

COUNT MONTALTO.

DURAZZO.	*Officers in the service of Montalto.*
MICHAEL DURAZZO.	
RIALVO.	
ANTONIO.	
ROMANO.	

COUNTESS JULIA, *Wife of Montalto.*

LADY LAURA, *Cousin to Montalto.*

CONSTANTIA.

Officers, Soldiers, &c. &c.

Scene lies at the Castle of Montalto, in the Appenines.

MONTALTO.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Platform of a Castle.—Day-break.*

RIALVO.

IT should be day, and yet the lazy sun,
Still lingering in the east, 'midst lowering clouds,
Hides his reluctant beams, as loth to rob
Yon silver crescent of its virgin brightness.
How beautiful and chaste the tender light,
That hangs on all around!—The garish blaze
Of mid-day sun, that clothes our Appenines
In all the luxury of heavenly splendor
Shows not so fair a scene to fancy's eye
As when these tremulous beams but half reveal
The lovely prodigality of nature.
'Tis strange how imperceptibly the mind
Is led to meditation by such scenery!
All worldly thoughts are hush'd; the bursting passions
That lately knew no bound, here calm'd and soften'd,
Catch the tranquillity, that breathes around,
And turn to adoration, and to Heaven.

Enter ANTONIO, *hastily.*

Ant. A plague upon such soldiers!—May fell agues,
And pestilent fevers fix upon their limbs;

Cramps vex their bodies; angry rheumatism
Prey on their delicate joints!

Ri. Good den Antonio!

Ant. Whip me such soldiers thro' the camp!—These soldiers?
A murrain on them for a beggarly pack
Of ambling coxcombs!—Soldiers! Heaven forbid!
Our suttler boys, the refuse of the camp,
Might better claim the title.

Ri. Patience, patience!
What stirs thee thus?

Ant. That, which had stirr'd to wrath
The veriest slug, that crawls beneath the sun.
Last night the Lady Julia gave to my keeping
Letters of weighty import, which, she prayed,
Might be forthwith dispatch'd to Count Montalto,
These gave I in strict charge to young Benvoglio,
Bidding him speed o' th' instant—What ensues?
Why half the night he lingers here on th' terrace,
Nor, as I learn, was journeying from the Hold,
'Till some short hour ago. May plagues go with him,
A soldier's curse upon him!

Ri. Truly love
Hath ruined here a soldier of much promise.

Ant. Marry, What love?

Ri. In yonder turret sleeps
The fair Constantia. Every night he takes
His stand beneath her window, and pours out
The pitiable story of his love
To the pale moon, and some half dozen sentinels,
Who marvel at his folly.

Ant. Does he then hope
To win by th' pitch of 's voice, or by the cunning
Of nimble fingers on a score of cat-guts?

There was a time, when if a soldier said,
" I love," he was believ'd—an honest frankness
Bore out th' uncouthness of the rough address,
And I do think me, that these soldier manners
Did more content the ladies, than the hum
Of nightly ballad-mongers, or the dalliance
Of beardless warriors.

Ri. Aye, beshrew me, did they—
The chariest fair-one can appreciate
The value of a song.

Ant. I am not wont
To borrow priviledge from growing years,
To fret and rail at youth, for that it shows
More idle and more full of merriment,
Than might become old age.—But these are times,
When even youth might blush (thou canst but think so!)
To wear it's garb so loose and wantonly.

Ri. Nay, of a truth, we live in fearful times,
Full of strange sights, and perilous shifts of fortune.
The world is sore diseased, so sore 'twould seem,
That Heaven would purge it into health again
By its own vices.—Evil in excess,
To salutary uses thus converted,
Turns to no ill account. But let that pass—
Where did the last advices leave Montalto?

Ant. Not far from hence, at Scarpi, where he holds
The papal troops in check. A choicer army,
Of more approved commanders, or of soldiers
More willing, or more apt, the light of Heaven
Never yet shone upon.

Ri. 'Twas rumoured yesterday
That breaking up his camp, here in the neighbourhood,
Bassano led fresh succours to the foe.

Ant. Not so.—Just o'er yon mountain's rugged brow
Our scouts advise, he lies encamp'd, in great
And growing force.

Ri. The Count Bassano bears him
High in the world's opinion—he is held
A captain of the most approved valour,
Temper'd with wary prudence.

Ant. Yet in this
He hath, methinks, belied his reputation.
These forces, newly levied, can but serve
To puzzle those, who, poring o'er their maps,
Count strength by numbers; To a soldier's eye
Such force were weakness.

Ri. It will shame our councils,
If with no richer means he work his purpose—
But who comes here; is 't not our good Lieutenant?

Ant. And by the towering plume and lofty tread,
His brother too—I pray you pardon me,
If I avoid their presence, 'till I stand
Excus'd from all reproach touching Binvoglio.

Ri. Nay then, have with you—I'll not tarry here
To answer to the questions, which shall follow.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Durazzo *and* Michael.

Mic. Not wrong'd?

Dur. No, by my soul, not wrong'd.

Mic. Is 't possible?

Dur. Am I so tame a wretch to crouch me down,
And heed it not, if proud oppression tread
In mockery on me? Is all shame extinct—
All honest and good feeling dead within me?
Have I no pulses, with impetuous beat
To tell me, if mine honor be aggrieved?

Mic. Yet hear me, brother!
Dur. Nay, I'll hear no more.
The cunning of thy wit lies all in this—
That thou canst deck the weaker cause too speciously.
I'll hear no more—Montalto hath not wrong'd me.
Mic. Now, in what fitful quarter is the moon,
To move thee to this pitch?—Art mad, good brother?
Dur. 'Twere much an I be not so, ere 'tis long.
Mic. Shame, shame upon thee for this idle fooling—
This most unnatural and unmanly heat!
If passion thus stand substitute for reason,
I might go preach to the wild waves, and they
Would hear me sooner.—Well!—I've done.
Dur. Forgive me!
I know not what I speak. This hellish deed
Confounds me past all reason. Didst thou say,
Montalto would be here to-day?
Mic. I did.
If my scheme hold, ere yet the bright-haired sun
Hath gain'd his mid-day height (and see where now
His harbinger, bright Lucifer, appears)
Montalto will be here.
Dur. So soon?
Mic. So soon!
Heaven grant me patience! 'would'st thou herd for ever
With slaves and bondsmen?—Ever walk the earth
At beck and bidding of some haughty tyrant,
When thou thyself mightst lord it o'er mankind?
Out on thy grovelling spirit!
Be a man?
Dur. Be a villain, Michael.
Mic. Did not one common mother bear us both?—
One common sire beget us?—From this hour,
Degenerate, wavering man, I would abjure thee—

Thee, and thy cause for ever. Why, by Heaven!
Thou art more fitful, than the raging sea;
More changeable, than winter; in thy promises
More treacherous, than the wily Israelite,
Whose coffers are his god. Fool that I was
To trust me to the solemn cozenage
Of oaths so lightly broken.

Dur. Oaths extorted,
By devilish arts won from my spell-bound conscience,
That slumber'd, whilst a brother's voice pour'd out
A catalogue of wrongs, so full, so deadly,
That, all amaz'd, I swore to do his bidding.
But now the dream is past—the spell's dissolved!—
Where are these injuries, that cry for blood?

Mic. In thy heart's core they should be. Thou hast wrongs,
Might drive a man, kneaded in manlier mould,
E'en on to madness.

Dur. I have yet to learn
This deadly count of injuries. By Heaven!
If I in aught stand debtor to Montalto,
'Tis on the score of honors, graces, favors,
Heaped with unsparing bounty on my head.

Mic. I cry you mercy!—Was Count Xavier's claim
Unsound, usurped; or did he hold this Earldom
In full and undisputed sovereignty? [title.

Dur. What may this mean?—Undoubted was his

Mic. He was the father of the Lady Laura.

Dur. Oh Michael, touch not thee!—probe not a wound,
That may not bear the handling.

Mic. How, not bear it!
Is there a festering, then?

Dur. If there be festering,

It were a brother's part to sooth the pain ;
A hand less kindly, might administer
The angry caustic.
Mic. I will use none ; utter
No irritating words ; but thou shalt suffer
That in brief speech I point wherein thou'rt wrong'd ;
And wake that vengeance in thee, which to want,
Were want of all, that dignifies our natures.
To Xavier, then.—He, doting, weak, old man,
When bending with th' infirmities of age,
(I pray thee, check my speech wherein it errs)
Mistrustful of a woman's rule, selected
His brother's son, our sovereign lord, to-day ;
And tender'd, with his daughter's virgin charms
This Earldom's rank and mastery to his having.
Dur. Most true.
Mic. The Count accepted ; well he might ;
Fair was the maid, and princely was the portion.
But ere our holy church had made them one,
The poor old Count fell sick, and died—What followed ?
Reckless of every oath, this treacherous nephew,
Soon as he reap'd the rich inheritance,
With most unfeeling haste, spurn'd from his arms
The injur'd daughter of his more than father,
And led the Lady Julia to the altar.
Dur. All this is true, but . . . . .
Mic. Hear me out !—Abandon'd,
Despised, neglected in her Father's halls,
The Lady Laura bow'd the neck in silence,
And drank the bitter draught of fruitless sorrow.
Yes ! in these very halls, where rival Princes
Once waited her high bidding, did she stand
The butt of menial insult, and derision ;

Thou then wert, even as now, the Count's lieutenant;
Thy service threw thee ever in the way
Of this most injured Lady. Time had bent
Her towering spirit, and she sought to pour
Her living wrongs into some friendly ear,
Where insult might not reach her.
Thou couldst not but be moved. Th' occasion called
For pity; and this pity became love.
Ere long she was thy wife, but how? By stealth,
With fear and trembling, like some base-born culprit,
Shunning the eye of day!—One shivering priest,
One solitary lamp, form'd the whole pomp,
The whole attendance, and whole pageantry,
That grac'd the nuptials of Count Xavier's daughter,
This Earldom's rightful mistress.

Dur. Idle pomp,
Vain ceremonies minister to pride;
But value not the weight of one poor scruple,
When reason, or when justice holds the balance.
Our marriage, brother, is as good, as binding,
As if a sovereign gave the bride away,
And Legates pour'd the blessing.

Mic. Aye! as good,
As binding, as though hell itself had forged
The chain for thy destruction.—
Look to the consequence!

Dur. Let chance what may,
I am prepared to meet it.

Mic. Aye, so valiant?
So fearlessly resolved?—This reckless spirit
Will stand thee in good need, when, some moons hence,
A living witness shall attest the union,
And claim a kinsman's title from Montalto.

Dur. Conjure not up to scare my trembling soul,
Prophetic dreams of misery!
Mic. Amazement!
Heard I aright?—I spoke but of Montalto,
The generous, noble, liberal, good, Montalto!
What if he point the dagger at the child,
Whose birth might mar the projects of ambition,
He loved the father, and the world will say,
Had loved him longer . . . had convenience served.
Dur. Good brother cease!
Mic. In common men, methinks,
Such friendship had found harsher appellation;
But he that wears a Diadem, may stamp
His actions, like his coin, and ever find
Those, nothing loth to take them as they're uttered.
Dur. Yet grant that safety and revenge be one.
Needs it the dagger, that doth strike, be poisoned?
What urged to this?
Mic. Necessity!
Dur. Fore Heaven!
A sorrier plea ne'er 'scus'd a sorrier deed.
Mic. Thou man of mercy, speak! what safer scheme
Of easier action, had thus lured the Lion
Home to his lair, single and unattended?
Had he come back'd by all the host of war,
That waits his nod, not all the power of Italy
Had snared this lordly quarry.
Dur. Heavenly God,
How thickly is my path beset with evil!
Mic. Away such idle thoughts!—All shall go well!
All yet be saved!
Dur. By blood!
Mic. By justice!

Dur. Never!—
Justice arms not the Assassin's hand.
Mic. But wields
The sword of retribution! then shall conscience
Whisper reproach to us, if countless crimes
Have swell'd the volume of Montalto's guilt
To draw the sentence of the law upon him?—
This goads us not. His castle and himself
We yield up to Bassano.—Holy church
In high and full Consistory shall speak
His condemnation or acquittal—
Dur. Rome
Is bloody in her judgments, where th' offender
Has stood in arms against her.
Mic. If she be,
On her the blood shall rest
[*a distant trumpet is heard.*
Hark!—
Dur. 'Tis his trumpet.—
Mic. Again!—Now never did these rocky vallies
Ring with a sweeter music. Courage brother!
The greedy hawk has pounced upon the lure
And shall be hooked straight.
Dur. If 'twere no worse
'Twere well.
Mic. Or worse, or better, we must on,
The stake is set, and must be lost or won
He comes!
Dur. Then let me hence, ere I betray
My treason and my sorrow—let us hence!
In truth, I dare not be the first to meet him.
Mic. Nor shall it need. Go, mix thee with the crowd,
That will anon assemble in the Gallery.

I'll to the castle gates to bid him welcome.—
Be of good cheer; act boldly; and fear nought.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Another part of the Platform.*

MONTALTO *and* ROMANO.

Mont. (speaking behind the scenes.)
Command the horses to the castle gates!
Romano and myself will pass the Terrace,
And mount the shorter way.
(Enters.)
The morning breeze
Bites keenly, yet with wholesome bitterness
'Tis said by many, that in these high regions
The thin and buoyant air doth through our veins
A purer current force, and you shall note
How the lithe swallow, and the towering falcon,
Birds, that affect a wholesome atmosphere,
Will ever haunt these places, and there build
Their airy tenements. What noise was that?

Rom. The wind, my Lord, in low and mournful gusts
Sighing thro' these old battlements.

Mont. It spoke
A greeting full of import, solemn and sad.
Fancy could hang a warning tongue in it.
What is the hour?

Rom. Upon the stroke of five,
As we left Chinsola, St. Catharine's bell
Toll'd four.

Mont. It did, just when the bird of night
Flew hooting past us. Didst thou not observe it?

Rom. I could not choose but do so, for it past

Not full a rapier's length above my head.
I might have struck it, had I been so will'd.

Mont. Would thou hadst struck it; 'tis a sorry bird
And augurs nothing good.

Rom. 'Tis oft remember'd
As an ill omen, if misfortune press
Close on its visitation. Sickly fancy,
And garrulous old age have given the bird
A very evil name.—

Mont. A shadow scares
The mind, that's ill at ease; All outward forms
Assume the colours, which the fancy lends them,
And that distemper'd, not a leaf can stir,
But seems fate's messenger.—Hast thou ne'er pressed
A sleepless pillow, when the storm has raged,
And listening to the churlish winds without,
Fancied strange voices, and wild prophecies?

Rom. Did not th' avowal shame a soldier's calling,
I might confess, perhaps, my midnight thoughts
Have savour'd sometimes of such idle terrors.

Mont. If these be idle terrors, why should men,
Who have affronted death under all forms,
In storms by sea, in war and feuds by land,
In pestilence and prison, why should these,
On whom the pallid livery of fear
Sits so uncouthly, thus upon the sudden
Turn veriest cowards to their proper fancies?
Is it not rather some prophetic voice,
Some warning God, that tells me these dark Towers
Are frowning on Montalto? That the bright orb
Which by th' advancing clock should long ago
Have cheer'd us with his beams, in very grief
Did fear to-day to look upon the world?—

Rom. Such thoughts are offspring of a sickly fancy,
You are too sad, my Lord.
Mont. Not over merry,
A man might break a world of wit on me,
Nor yet provoke my spirit to a smile.
Yet how is this, that none are found to greet us?
Rom. We are betimes; none but the sentinels
Are stirring yet. Our camp-like hours shall move
The merriment of those, who sleep, securely
Guarded by fosse and rampart. Yet I'll onward,
If it so please you, to the Lady Julia,
And greet her with the news of your arrival. [me,
Mont. 'Twere kindly done; and, as thy lips announce
Mark well th' expression of thy Lady's features.
Rom. My Lord!
Mont. It is a trick of love—nought else:
For I would know, if joy do make her weep:
And that she will rejoice at my return,
I nothing doubt. But there are some, who laugh;
And some, who weep for joy. So note her well.
Rom. My Lord shall be obeyed.
Mont. Yet stay, Romano—
Were it not better openly to trust
My secret to his keeping, than to leave } *aside.*
Conjecture, thus awaken'd, to its phantasies? }
Tell me, Romano, if in all the years,
That thou hast joined thy fortunes to mine house,
Stand I thy debtor still, (nay, speak it freely)
In gratitude, or recompense of services?
Rom. All that I am, Montalto's bounty made me.
It is a heavy debt of gratitude,
Due on my part; which this poor life, my Lord,
Would ill repay.

Mont. I do believe thee honest;
Would think thee prudent too, but there are men,
Whose natures cannot bear a secret's weight:
For either they must ease their labouring breasts,
Whispering to every wind their friend's misfortunes,
Or, by an over-acted ignorance,
Tell more than words could utter. Art thou of these?

Rom. I ne'er was held as such.

Mont. If there be truth
In man, it is in thee. In early youth
Thou wert my play-fellow, and, in those sports
Which boyhood most delights in, thou didst hold
The same rough honesty, thy riper age
Has never yet belied.—Give me thine hand—
And oh, Romano, give thy pity with it:
For on the face of this terrestrial globe,
There walks no man so wretched as Montalto.

Rom. Amazement!—wretched?—Count Montalto wretched?

Mont. Why, 'tis too poor a word:—rack'd, agonized,
Launch'd on the bosom of a boisterous sea;
No star to guide—no compass to direct me.
Yet here I stand, the butt of all men's envy;
My fortune's built upon so firm a rock,
'Tis thought no storm can reach me!

Rom. Can this be?
'Tis scarcely credible.

Mont. The prying world
May take account of wealth, and empty honors,
Measure our stretch of land—note what we hold
In jewels—what in bonds, or ventured forth
In portly Argosies—nay! tell to th' just [able,
The worth of fortune's smiles; or those more change-

More fickle still, of Princes.
But who shall dare to judge the inward man?
If wealth were bliss, who should be blest, as I?
If honor, who's a fairer claim to happiness?
If fame, whose deeds speak louder than Montalto's?
And in that lesser circle, in that haven
Of all our hopes and joys, even in my home,
Who boasts a lovelier offspring?—who a wife
So exquisite in beauty . . . . . .

Rom. Or so rich
I' th' qualities of mind, which e'en surpass
Her beauty's excellence—in all so perfect!

Mont. Right, right—a peerless lady.—Read o'er this.

Rom. *(reads.)*

> "The daring Eagle seeks a distant war,
> "And leaves his mate to rear the infant brood,
> "But let him mark the Buzzard left behind,
> "Or he may chance to own a bastard race."

What riddle's this?

Mont. A riddle, which to solve,
May drive me to distraction—overturn
The fairy fabric of felicity,
And leave me poorer in all sort of comfort,
In all good hope; than any he, who drags
A loath'd existence underneath the sun! [amazed me!

Rom. What may this mean, my Lord? You have

Mont. This brought me from the camp.

Rom. With what intent?

Mont. Art thou so dull of intellect, to ask
The utterance of each thought? There are, methinks,
That should be guess'd, not spoken.

Rom. And is this
O' th' number? Oh, beware, my Lord—you stand

Upon a giddy precipice, from whence,
All that the eye beholds, is viewed askance,
Distorted, or at best but dimly seen.
This hellish mystery must be unravelled.
Whence came this paper?

Mont. It was found at night
Upon the table in my tent.

Rom. No trace
From whence it came?

Mont. None!

Rom. And on such foundations
Unproved, unvouched for, you would fix a blot
Upon a fame, which, 'till this guilty hour
The envious tongue of malice dared not slander?
Some fiend who would destroy Montalto's peace . . .

Mont. Some friend who would preserve Montalto's honor!

Rom. My Lord, the Lady Julia is . . . . . .

Mont. A woman!

Rom. If I knew fairer title, even to that
For your sweet Lady would I make pretence,
But woman is the perfect sum of all!—
Love, gentleness, and honor, virtue, delicacy,
Truth, charity, compassion, loveliness,
All this is woman, and thus form'd she makes
Existence, bliss; this world, a paradise!—
Oh, be more just!—Let reason's voice be heard,
And pluck the devilish poison from your eye,
That robes the form of innocence itself
In all the hues of guilt.

Mont. (musing) Had I been told,
That she were suddenly dead, ta'en unawares
By some dread visitation from above,

I could, methinks, have borne it.—Had my Castle
Been by the enemy surprized, my Wife,
And Children all slaughtered, even this perhaps
I had borne up against, for honor here
Had not forbid the ease and flow of sorrow—
But this!
Give me thy pardon, worthy friend, there was
I know not what of comfort in thy speech.

Rom. I would, my Lord might find it in his reason.

Mont. Reason! This hath no meaning, good Romano!
If woman be the theme 'tis a vain word.
Speak not of reason! didst thou note, I pray thee,
When I was lately summoned to the wars,
How Julia stood affected?

Rom. In very truth
Not I.

Mont. Nay, speak it out!

Rom. What should I speak?

Mont. All thou didst then observe.

Rom. Nothing, by Heaven!
Nothing did I observe, or note as strange,

Mont. She did not weep, thou saidst?

Rom. Some dæmon whisper'd it,
(If you heard aught might bear so foul a meaning)
I said it not, my Lord.

Mont. But thou didst think so?

Rom. Nor on my tongue, nor in my thought was found
So false a charge.

Mont. And yet if she did weep,
'Twas in such sort, as tho' it were a doubt,
If she would weep, or smile.

Rom. If thus you dwell
On all a sickening spirit can devise,

Doubt soon will ripen into certainty,
Suspicion seem as proof, and then be acted on
To blast your happiness for ever.

Mont. Hear me!

Keep, as the treasure of thy soul, the secret
I have confided to thee. Never seem
To guess my meaning, tho' my words may bear
A doubtful sense. Have a friend's ear and eye
To hear all, and to see all, and a tongue,
Which may be shackled, if occasion need,
Yet ready at the call of friendship. Thus,
If aught avail Montalto's love and favor,
Thy fortunes shall be prosperous.

Rom. I needed
No other spur to this, than my good conscience.
But see the Castle-gates turn on their hinges:
A goodly company comes forth.

Mont. Remember!

Enter Laura, Michael, Antonio, Rialvo, *and others.*

Laur. Be Laura first to welcome thy return!

Mont. Thanks to my gentle cousin!—Worthy friends,
My greetings to ye all!

Laur. To what blest chance
May we attribute such an happiness?
'Tis an unlook'd-for pleasure.

Mont. And unlook'd-for,
Is it less welcome, Laura?

Laur. Oh, not so!
'Tis doubly welcome, for the voice of Fame
Had whisper'd to our somewhat credulous ears,
That, wrapt in dreams of conquest and ambition,
Montalto seldom thought of those he loved.

Mont. Fame has belied me, Laura. If the thoughts
Of those I love, were occupied with me,
As mine with them, then were I blest indeed.

Laur. And yet this sudden, and unlook'd-for coming,
Forgive a woman's fears! confounds my reason.
Speak, Cousin, is all well?

Mont. I am no messenger
Of evil tidings. I have left all well.
But in this fair and goodly company,
The first and dearest is still missing, Laura!

Laur. My cousin Julia . . . . . .

Mont. Was not wont to be
The last to meet me.

Laur. Thus Suspicion ever
Treads on the heels of Love! This should not be—
My gentle Cousin knew not of your coming,
Nor is't her custom, if no duty press,
To rise thus early. It is scarcely day.
Montalto's jealous love has overlook'd
Th' unseasonable hour.

Mont. Unseasonable?

Laur. Love only might not find it so, Montalto!
For see! the pale and sickly moon still holds
Her even course; nor to her brighter rival
Hath yielded up dominion. But let us in!
The hour that brings Montalto to his home,
Julia will never find unseasonable.

[*Exeunt into the Castle.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Castle.*

Montalto *and* Julia.

Mont. Is Julia then so pleased at my return?

Jul. In truth I think the question ill-applied;
It sounded harshly from Montalto's lips.
Had Julia come unlook'd-for by her Lord,
She had not ask'd if he were pleas'd, or no.

Mont. Yet Jealousy, they say, 's the test of love.

Jul. So Poets feign, perhaps with reason too,
When Love is young, nor conscious of requital,
But when the soul hath met its kindred soul,
And holy rites have sanctified the union,
Doubt then is Calumny, and Jealousy
Love's tomb.

Mont. Dost love me Julia?

Jul. Oh Montalto!
Since last we parted, thou alone hast filled
My waking thoughts by day, my dreams by night.
My early orisons, and evening prayers
Knew but one theme; so woven was thy image
In every thought, word, action, it would seem
I thought, I moved, I lived, but at thy bidding.
Then canst thou ask me if I love thee?

Mont. Choicest of Heaven's best gifts! sweet Wife, sweet Julia,
Well may'st thou blame me for this ill-timed Jealousy,
When in the liquid lustre of that eye,
The mute expression of that eloquent glance,

I read Affection, Constancy, and Truth.
Dull must he be, who needs another language
Where Nature speaks so plainly.
Jul. O my Lord!
I am a poor weak woman, nothing proud
But of a pure and holy love for thee.
Whate'er of grace, or virtue, I possess,
(And 'tis belike, thy flattery makes me think,
That I hold either) that would I have doubled
Ten thousand, thousand times, if I, so gifted,
Might win securer Empire o'er thy heart,
I would be fair as Helen; graceful as Dian;
Wise as Minerva; from each spotless name,
That lives renown'd in history, or fable,
Steal some recorded virtue, or some charm,
To make me worthier of Montalto's Love.
Mont. Nay, seek not models, thou thyself a model.
Nature has gifted thee with more than these.
Fair Helen's beauty, but without her frailty;
Chaste Dian's grace, but not her coldness with it;
Minerva's wisdom, but no pride to mar it.
All change in thee were loss.
Jul. Out, out upon thee!
Why this is downright flattery.
Mont. By Heaven!
'Tis truth, plain, simple truth.—Thou art to me
All goodness, virtue, honor, beauty, grace;
The excellence of all.
Jul. Forbear, forbear,
Lest growing vain I learn to think it truth,
And in the fancied holding of such qualities,
Thy flattery decks me with, begin to form
Opinions, founded on no better ground
Than my weak judgement.

Mont. And so founded, Julia,
They shall command attention, such as not
The Delphic Oracle received, when Nations
Hung, entranced, upon its high decrees.
Speak then, sweet Excellence, that I may learn
To mend me by thy counsels.

Jul. To what pass
My flippant tongue has brought me. My poor wit
Dares not expose its weakness to the ken
Of manly wisdom. Yet there is one question,
Which Love might ask of Love, but still . . . . . .

Mont. Nay, speak it out!

Jul. Wilt thou not mock, Montalto,
A woman's idle terrors?

Mont. Fear it not.

Jul. Then would I ask, why every passing breeze,
That bears a war-note to the listening ear,
Must evermore be signal of my Widowhood?
Thou standst possest of fair inheritance,
And wide dominion, which might amply bound
The wishes of an hon'rable ambition,
But these content thee not.—Sound but a trumpet,
Be but a flag unfurled from furthest Alps
To where th' Amato pours its scanty stream,
Straight from his eyrie bursts the lordly Eagle,
Leaving his feeble young, and weeping mate
To share in wars, as foreign to his welfare,
As fatal to the peace of those, who love him.

Mont. Seek in the restless temper of the times,
Why such things are. Force is the only God,
That now draws homage from all ranks of men,
And 'till a purer adoration rise,
No armed Band can tread the soil of Italy,

But menaces destruction to Montalto.
Rightful inheritance and long possession,
The just security of peaceful times,
Are now th' attractions, that invite the Storm.
Still must the sword be ready to protect
That which our Sires have left us. Force alone
Upholds the scale of justice, and security
Lives but in preparation and defiance—
But cheer thee Julia! happier days shall come,
The halcyon hours of peace shall smile upon us.

Jul. Alas! I fear me, that these halcyon hours
Live in thy fancy rather than thy hope.

Mont. Am I so mad to dash away the Cup
Of happiness, yet scarcely tasted? Or
So strongly formed by Nature, in her wrath,
That I can draw no rapture from thy smiles;
No music from my babes sweet prattling;
No glory from my people's happiness;
No comfort from the inward whisperings
Of an approving conscience?—Oh believe me,
Well pleased could I put off the garb of war,
To rest my head upon the lap of Love,
And taste that bliss ambition knows not of.

Jul. Can this be true or does Montalto strive
In pity to a woman's idle fears
To trick out golden visions, fair to gaze on,
But unsubstantial, and as fleeting too
As the gay Iris of a thousand dyes.
But in the thought, there's heaven, and I will learn
To build a hope upon it. Come, my Lord!
Our ruddy boys have not yet lisp'd thy welcome.
The eldest rogue hath caught the trick o' th' times,
And talks of tilts, and courtly tournaments,

Grasps his light wand, and courses round the chamber
With no mean mimicry of knightly bearing.
The younger urchin too . . . . But come, Montalto,
I'll lead thee to their chamber.

Mont. Lead! I follow thee.

[*Exit Julia.*

Was that the voice of guilt? Can treason wear
So sweet a smile?—Oh no! I wrong'd thee, Julia.
Volumes of damning evidence would fail
T' undo the mute but open testimony,
Borne in thy countenance. Nature has set
Out of her bounty, such a mark upon thee,
'Tis but to gaze, and every doubt is vanish'd.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The Gallery of the Castle.*

Laura *and* Michael.

Laur. 'Tis done!—The day-star of Montalto's for-
In rapid motion hurries down the sky. [tune
Joy to thee Michael, joy!—

Mic. I would have joy,
That I might blazon to the multitude.
What sickly semblance of a joy is this,
No tongue dare speak, no eye give notice of?
'Though on the wane the day-star of his fortune
Still rides the sky.

Laur. But sinks to rise no more!
Ne'er shall I gaze upon its beams again
Nor sicken at its glories. Vengeance! Vengeance!
Thine is the victim!—

Mic. He shall 'scape us yet,
If passion be not temper'd by discretion.

Laur. Would Michael play the sophist, and spy out,
With more than microscopic power of vision,
Phantoms of danger, where no danger lies?
Mic. If all the partners of this Act were moved
But by one soul, that only soul were thine,
There were no reason to mistrust our venture.
Laur. Whom should we fear?
Mic. Durazzo!
Laur. How, thy brother?—
Mic. Aye, Lady, and thy husband.
Laur. On my Life,
Thou wrongs't thy brother by this base suspicion.
A nobler heart, of more approved worth,
Beats not within the breast of mortal man.
Durazzo's name was never link'd with treason.
Mic. Treason hath many readings; aye, good Lady,
As many as the interests, that live
Encompass'd in the act. As passion points
'Tis treason, or 'tis virtue, to the few;
The event doth make it either to the many.
This very deed, which doth assume to us
The specious show of even-handed Justice,
May to my brother's apprehension take
A different semblance.
Laur. Are Heaven's laws so mutable?
Does virtue bear no stamp of the Divinity,
That man, vain man, can give it currency,
Or good, or evil, as may suit his purpose?
Michael, I know thee to be great and daring,
Bold in emprize, and fertile in resources,
But I do know thy nature to be full
Of strange suspicion, and wild jealousies.
Is not Durazzo mine?

Mic. Thy husband, yes!
But what a weight of favors heap'd upon him,
How honor'd in all graces by Montalto!
From his youth up no bread has past his lips,
But bore th' impression of Montalto's bounty.
His reputation and his fame in war,
His name, his very being (for to live
Unhonor'd and unknown, were nought) all these
Are from Montalto!

Laur. All! God help thee, man,
Why thou dost chronicle thine idol's bounties,
Fairer than monkish scroll, or musty legend,
The excellences of some patron Saint.
Hath he given bread, and name, and reputation?
Why this is well, albeit the bread he gave,
Grew on my Father's lands; albeit the name,
That he hath honor'd, this proud reputation,
Did spring amidst the ranks, my Father's marshall'd.
These are fair gifts, 'tis true, but have I dealt
My favors with a hand more niggardly?
Montalto from an overplus of wealth
Gives what is useless to him; I give all,
Myself, my claims, my injuries, my vengeance!

Mic. By heaven! it marvels me so proud a spirit
Should e'er have stoop'd to such a mate as thine.
Lady, there are, who had assail'd high Heaven;
Plunged to the depths of the unfathom'd Sea,
Dared all the dangers of the trackless desert;
And ask'd no richer recompense to boot,
Than thy fair favor. Out upon the chance,
That thou shouldst be so mated!

Laur. These are themes
Of idleness, all foreign to our purpose.

Pass but a few short hours, come but to-morrow,
And all is well.

Mic. All had been well, had Heaven,
Not form'd him changeful as th' inconstant vane
That crowns yon pinnacle, doing obedience
To the wild wind, its master. Well to-morrow!
Hast thou assurance of to-day? Our danger
Grows with the lapse of time. A coward's brain,
The teeming mother is, and conscience stands
To midwife to the thoughts, that bode our ruin.

Laur. I could draw strange suspicion from thy speech
Did I not know thee true. Why seek to scare me
At such late hour, as this? Beware, beware,
Lest all the woman rush into my soul,
And fright me from my purpose.

Mic. Not to scare thee,
But to awaken caution, which, perchance,
Might slumber o'er extorted acquiescence;
Hold I this language. He is sworn to us,
But trust not that, oaths are but words; words bubbles,
That swell and burst i' th' circumambient air,
And then are mark'd no more. Look to him well!
Hang on his steps, nor loose your eye from him
Till consummation make the deed irrevocable.
He comes. Remember!

Enter DURAZZO.

Dur. Laura! and my brother!—
I sought ye both to ease my troubled mind.
I'll stir no more in this.

Mic. Oh bravely done
To pull the tottering fabric on our heads,
And fly thyself from danger.

Dur. Urge me not,

For desperation will grow frantic, brother.
What if I hold from this? are there not deeds
Humanity will shrink from?—'Twas no hand
Of mine raised up this pyramid of guilt.

Mic. The key-stone, that I trusted to, was hollow,
Hollow at heart, else had this goodly pile,
The fabric of our fortunes, stood secure
Beyond the reach of fate.

Laur. Forbear, forbear!
This idle war of words might shame ye both.
Wouldst thou abandon me?

Dur. What is the deed
Accomplish'd, or conceived, I stand accused of,
May bear out such suspicion?

Laur. Nay, Durazzo—
I doubted not but thou wert slandered here.
Michael, there flows no base nor traiterous blood
Within these veins to shame thy consanguinity.
Perhaps . . . . . .

Dur. Sweet Laura, cease!—urge this no further!

Mic. If kindred feeling prove a kindred blood
I know him not; our brotherhood exists
But in an empty and dishonor'd name.
Is this thy wife?

Dur. Brother, she is my all!
My comfort, pride, and happiness.

Mic. Shame on thee,
That thou shouldst dare to speak it, and repay
This Love with treachery. Art thou a man,
Or has the bugbear, Conscience, choked in thee
All sense and show of manhood? Fye upon thee!
Wouldst give these delicate joints to be the sport
Of brutal violence? This bosom, fraught
With holiest love for thee, to be the theatre

For Death to play his antics on?—Shake not
Thy head in doubt. The infant lives within her,
Whose birth reveals the deed, thou darest not utter,
And bloodiest vengeance follows.

Laur. Let it follow!
Durazzo's hand, that might have stay'd the blow,
Durazzo's hand will give a wound more deep,
More piercing than Montalto's angry steel.
But for our helpless babe, poor innocent,
Who at its birth shall feel the murderer's gripe . . . .

Dur. Forbid it heaven! Lives there in human form
So merciless a wretch?

Mic. Ambition's votaries
Reck not of faith or mercy—yearns the tyger
To list the thrilling shriek of agony,
That 'scapes his destined prey?—Such is man's mercy
Where'er Ambition calls.

Laur. Think not of mercy,
But as a tender plant, which the quick growth
Of passion shall choke up. Think not of mercy,
It blossoms not for us.

Mic. Speak, man!—art dumb?—
He heeds us not.

Laur. Speak to thy wife!—Durazzo!
How he is wrapt in thought.

Mic. Urge him no further;
The tongue doth shame to speak the mind's resolve.
We are betrayed!

Laur. My soul on it, 'tis false.

Dur. Can Justice be attained, but by Injustice?
That mine may prosper, must Montalto perish?

Mic. Nay, shame not thus the lofty Roman part,
That thou wouldst act—Speak plainly, man; condemn
With steadier voice thy wife and child to death.

Dur. Yet hath he borne himself so well; so won
Upon the good opinion of the world . . . . . .
Laur. Heaven grant me patience!—Hath Montalto won
This fair opinion? Oh my poor, lost country,
Land of my Fathers, let thy sorrow speak
To shame the utterance of this braggart's Tale.
Look from this Oriel—Far as eye can range,
Mountain, or Valley, Upland, Lawn, or Plain,
How desolate!—Th' exterminating hand
Of Death has past in anger over all
The Country, and its produce; Man and beast.
And yet these thriftless wilds, this ragged land
Of docks and brambles, at no distant period
Waved with the yellow harvest. The blithe Song,
The peasant's merry pipe, at early dawn [Raven
Were sounds not mark'd as strange, where now the
With hoarse, discordant voice, alone gives note
Of animated being . . . . . .
Dur. Th' ambitious pride of Rome . . . . . .
Laur. Montalto's pride,
Montalto's wild ambition, drew upon us,
Drew on this wretched Land the curse of Heaven.
These rivet up the hoary head in steel,
These tear untimely from his mother's arms
The stripling boy, and lead him to the field,
To perish, haply, by a kinsman's hand.
Oh 'tis a war of brothers, and calls out
For heavenly vengeance.
Mic. Yet this is the man,
Whom thou wouldst hold a model to the age,
A Demi-God in attribute and bearing,
This is the golden idol, at whose shrine
Honor and Love, Affection, Duty, Gratitude,

Are offer'd up in ruthless sacrifice!
Oh shame upon thee, shame!

Laur. Look not so sadly, be resolute,
Thou do'st ambition Fame, and thou shalt shine
A hero, in this Age's Chronicle.
This deed shall live when we are dead and gone,
And gaping hinds, that crowd the gossip's fire
Shall lift the eyes in centuries to come
For wonder of thy virtue's excellence—
Come, come, be bold, nor in this tragedy
Show aught may shame thy acting—Lead me to death!

Dur. Oh Laura, speak not thus!—Thou hast pre-
Do with me as ye will. [vail'd,

Laur. Take courage, man!
Compliance thus express'd, is half recall'd;
Wear not a face, that would belie thy tongue.

Dur. Give it no heed. Whate'er the face I wear,
Thine am I, thine for ever.

Laur. Bravely spoken.

Mic. Montalto comes, here let us separate.
Ye to the platform, in an hour at latest
I'll meet ye. Be it mine to weave the toil
Shall snare this lordly Lion.

Laur. To thy care,
We leave him, nothing doubtful—away!

Dur. Away!

[*Exeunt Durazzo and Laura.*

Enter MONTALTO.

Mont. Went not my Cousin hence?

Mic. She did, my Lord.

Mont. And seem'd, methinks, as she would shun my
I would have spoken with her. [presence

Mic. I'll follow her steps, and . . . . . .

Mont. Nay, good Michael,
The matter presses not, but it will keep
'Till we shall meet anon.
This easy Life
Doth marvelously well become thee, Michael.
Thou thrivest visibly. Thy belt has grown
Some inch or two since last we parted, Man.
Come, come, unburthen thee!—What's stirring here?
What news hast thou to tell?

Mic. Not much of news.
War, endless war, the theme of every tongue.

Mont. And to a Soldier's ear, what theme more [grateful?

Mic. Truly to those,
Whose actions form the burthen of the Song,
The music of the spheres were not more sweet;
But banish'd from your ranks, coop'd up in walls,
What boots it us, who fill the trump of Fame?

Mont. Not less an honorable part is thine,
'Though Rumour with her hundred tongues, forbear
To blazon it abroad. But if thou cravest
A busier part, and in the tented field
Wouldst be our fellow-labourer; 'tis well.
In the new levies thou shallt have command
Such as may not disgrace the rank thou bear'st,
And former service.

Mic. Let my actions speak
My gratitude; my sword my thanks, my Lord.
I cannot hence too soon: This idle being
Suits not my nature. This is no place for me.
Rough honesty, I boast no other merit,
Ill tallies with the empty courtesy,
And idle dalliance of a Lady's chamber,
I would have leave to bear me like a soldier;

Have ears and eyes, that I might call my own;
Have honor too, and truth.—In my command
May Michael's service shame not your good favor.
Mont. 'Twill honor it the rather. But thou speak'st
With warmth th' occasion calls not for.—Has aught
Occurred to anger thee?
Mic. To grieve me, much!
Mont. Indeed!
Mic. If it were wisdom's part to be observant,
Or being observant, prudent to reveal
All so observed, I might perhaps . . . . . but these
Are undigested fancies, wild surmises,
Encouraged to no end; founded perhaps
On error, or on misconception, or . . . . . .
When shall we march, my Lord?
Mont. First answer me,
(For thou hast strangely moved me by thy speech)
What dark, mysterious meaning lurks untold
Beneath these treacherous words, that mock the ear
With reason's semblance, yet escape the sense?
What wouldst thou hint at?
Mic. Hint at!
Mont. Aye, thou saidst, [ness'd;
Thou wert much grieved at something thou hadst wit-
And to my further questions, muttered answers
Of doubtful import; of much meaning, Michael,
Implied, tho' not express'd.
Mic. Said I much grieved?
Was that the word?—no matter! you are come,
And all is well again.
Mont. Thou triflest with me.
Was then my coming so unlook'd for?
Mic. Aye, truly; most unlook'd for.

Mont. And by whom?
Mic. My Lord!
Mont. Hast lost the faculty of speech?
By whom, I say?—
Mic. I must suppose by all. [construe it,)
Mont. And thou wouldst have me think (for so I
My coming was unwish'd for?
Mic. Said I aught,
Might challenge such construction? If I did,
I cry you mercy, it was idly spoken,
Without reflexion such as might become
The utterance of these words.
Mont. That there are friends,
Who borrow friendship's tongue to vent their poison,
I am not yet to learn. There is in thee
A something (God forgive me if I err!)
Doth make the thick pulsations of my blood
To curdle in my veins, and in this bosom
A loathing rise, I almost might call fear.
Speak! thou, who hast unmann'd me;
Speak, tho' thy words be death.
Mic. Does honesty.
Savour thus harshly to the Count Montalto?
Henceforth I'm dumb!—
Mont. Dumb art thou, and dost hope
Thus to evade the perils of thy calling?
Dumb as thou art, thou shallt find speech for me.
Away with all evasion!—To the point!—
What know'st thou of my Wife?
Mic. Of Lady Julia?
Mont. Have I another Wife?
Mic. My Lord . . . . . this question . . . . .
I scarce know how to answer. . . . Know of her!

I know her fair, kind, charitable, gentle;
Virtuous I'd dare be sworn . . . . .
Mont. Indeed!—what, virtuous!
Grammercy man! I thank thee.—Look on her!
Is Nature's print illegible, slurr'd o'er
With villainous blots, or are her characters
Goodly and fair to gaze on?—If thou read'st
Aught worse than honor, in that open front,
Aught in those eyes, but virtue and chaste Love,
The fault doth lie in thee. Can dæmons wrest
The sacred stamp of Nature from the grasp,
To pass such cunning forgeries on the world,
Or Heaven's own signet falsify?
Mic. Were such
The words I utter'd?—You outrun my meaning.
If watchful friendship hath found cause to rouze
Suspicion, is suspicion proof?—
Mont. Not proof,
But worse than proof. Give me but that,
Show that the lips of foul desire have wantoned
O'er all her beauties, like the sultry South,
That she hath breathed her hot and fiery Love
On every comer, this proud soul shall draw
A cure from out the poison.—But to press
A seeming angel to my breast, to riot
In extacy of bliss, yet mar it all,
By doubting its reality; 'tis madness!
'Tis agony, despair!
Mic. Be calm, my Lord!
You stir too warmly in this business.
That you have rear'd construction on my speech,
Beyond its warranty, doth well appear.

Mont. True, true; thy speech was simple, plain, and guileless;
My Jealousy alone envenom'd it.
'Tis I have played the cunning chymist here,
Extracting from a weed, harmless and innocent,
As subtle poison, as cold-blooded villainy
Might wish t' administer. Come, honest soul,
Unburthen thee of all thou labourest with;
Fears, doubts, suspicions, all!

Mic. My Lord, my Lord,
In this command you heap a task upon me,
Obedience, although willing, cannot master.
How shall I speak of fears, of doubts, suspicions,
That rise up all unbidden in the mind,
Founded as oft on fancy, as on fact;
Self-born, impossible of proof, Suspicion
Doth live on atomies, on shadows;
On whisperings as on silence; contrarieties;
On combination of a thousand nothings
Impervious to your view, seen clear by mine.
It doth depend, my Lord, on forms of intellect
As various, as the sculls, that case it in.
How shall all this be spoken?—How to minds
Incredulous, made manifest?

Mont. Had Nature
Cast her i' th' common mould, malice, belike,
Might on no better ground have slander'd her,
But who dare spy deformity in Heaven?
Who, if an angry film obscure his sight,
Doth turn th' accuser of the glorious sun,
Fixing his own infirmity on that,
Which spotless is, and perfect?—To the point!
What hast thou seen?

Mic. Would that some fell disease

Had blistered up my tongue, ere honesty
Had stirr'd me on to this. I merit it—
I should have been more prudent; better known
My interest.—What boots it what I've seen?
You had not look'd on it with eyes like mine;
You had not found to censure, Heaven forbid!
In midnight closetting with waiting women;
In frequent letters passing to and fro . . . . . .

Mont. Letters!—this will admit of proof; this shows
In shape more tangible. Whence came these Letters?
What were their import and complexion?

Mic. The dullest wit had lighted on these questions,
Nor unprepared have met them. Honesty
Looks not beyond the truth—I cannot speak
To what I know not.———

Mont. But Letters cannot drop from out the Moon,
Nor fly athwart the sky. Was there no Messenger?

Mic. I saw no Messenger. That Letters came,
Were open'd, answer'd, and dispatch'd, 'tis certain.
The accident, that gave this secret to me,
I will relate . . . . .

Mont. What more?

Mic. What more, my Lord!

Mont. Is this the sum and substance of thy charge?

Mic. I never made a charge. Obedience wrung from [me
That I had fain not spoken.———

Mont. Art not a villain, Michael?

Mic. Aye, indeed!
A villain! Nay, my Lord, I am no villain.

Mont. I cry thee mercy, then, for I had said,
Thou wert the veriest villain, that ere drove
A traiterous purpose forward; I the while,
The poorest and the meanest instrument

That ere was played upon, by touch so vile—
Thus has it past, even thus!—Oh mind of Man!—
So infinite in thought! so rich in fancy!
So wonderful in learning, not the span
Of yon o'er-arching Heaven can limit in
Th' ambition of thy science, where is now
Thy boast, pride, glory, if the slightest breath,
That villainy can breathe, hath power to rouze
The slumbering passions to the mastery,
And ruin of thy noblest faculties!
Out of my sight!—Be gone!

Mic. My Lord!

Mont. Begone!

I breathe not freely in thy company!
The gliding adder, that doth cross my path;
The bloated, venomous toad; the deadly scorpion;
Things all unsightly, strange, and horrible,
Revolt not so my nature, wake not in me
Such loathing and disgust, such deep abhorrence,
As doth thy hated presence.—Hence!—begone!

[*Exit Michael.*

Has she then furnish'd out the common talk?
Her levity the butt and savoury theme
Of every Ruffian's jest?—It cannot be.
The hardihood of veteran guilt had shrunk
Abash'd from this, and Julia . . . . . Oh impossible!

[*Exit.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Court of the Castle.*

MICHAEL.

IT rankles deeply, but this headstrong rage
Works onward to our purpose. If he pause
To think, suspicion follows thought, and truth
Will flash upon suspicion. He doth hope
To pass this incredulity upon me
As springing from the heart, but he is struck,
Aye, to the inmost core, and we must feed
The greedy jealousy, or wary judgment
May turn the dagger back upon ourselves.
I urg'd the Letters home, for if he gain
An inkling of Bassano's correspondence,
This will bring confirmation to his jealousy,
And ward the danger from us. All goes smoothly,
But in the lagging humour of my brother.
Yet such are Fortune's minions!—Braver then
Through toils and perils force her favors from her,
But these, awakening from their downy beds,
Find wealth and honors shower'd upon their slumbers.
Now what could Laura find, i' th' name of fickleness!
To doat on in my brother?—Stood I not by
A stouter, properer man; form'd every way
For lustier deeds than he; not more ill-favour'd,
And some few summers younger?—Let it pass,
'Tis hard, if my advantage spring not from it.

My ladder he shall be, wherewith to mount
To all I covet. In this night's adventure
Montalto perishes. His honors, titles,
Fiefs, Castles, and Domains, devolve on Laura,
And in the right of her, his lawful Wife,
Upon Durazzo!—Then comes the master-stroke;
Spoil'd even of hope, the wretched, outcast Julia
Finds in these arms a husband and protector,
Who from a brother's brow, tearing the Diadem,
Shall proudly wear it with all good men's blessings,
Champion of injured Innocence!—Oh excellent!—
But here comes one, who may prove useful to us,
If, as I do suspect, his Loyalty
Cleave to Montalto's honors, not his person.

Enter Romano.

Well met! Fair welcome to our walls again,

Rom. I thank you, Sir.

Mic. I pray you, did you leave
Manfredi in the Camp?

Rom. Aye, Sir, but wounded.
A villainous retainer of Caraffa,
In sore despite for some rude jest thrown out
Against his Mistress' faith, retorted back
The bitter jibing with his dagger's point.
Manfredi fell!

Mic. 'Fore Heaven! A sorry jest.
Was he deep wounded?

Rom. Nay not quite so deep
To cure him of all jesting, but enough
To temper that same humour, which he wears
To all his friends' disquiet, with a something
More bordering upon prudence.—

Mic. May it prove so!
Believe me, Sir, if radical the cure,
'Twere not too dearly purchased.—You have had
A restless time i' th' Camp.
Rom. Not much of that.
A weary time, God wot!
Mic. How brook'd the soldiery,
Still heated with their last year's victories,
This cautious mode of warfare?
Rom. Oh for those,
Whose rapiers could not rest within their scabbards,
There still was work enough, and even to spare.
The restless spirits on either side, maintained
A constant warfare at the outposts.
Mic. Aye,
I warrant me!—An Army, so composed,
Will still outrun the cautious steps of prudence.
Rom. Full many a gallant soldier, but for this,
Had graced our ranks, who now lies cold and speechless.
Death has been busy on our side with names
Of no small reck'ning.
Mich. It was rumour'd so;
And we have heard of rising discontent,
Of murmurings in the Camp.
Rom. Not there alone
Does discontent exist; 'tis in the State;
The City; in our houses; wheresoe'er
Mankind have more of leisure, than of labour;
More liberty than just restraint; more riches
Than moderate wants require; there is it found.
It is the vice o' th' times. An acrid humour
The sturdy health within throws to the surface.

Mic. Yet is it said, that many in your ranks,
Who bear an honorable name, and stand
High in the world's opinion, loudly censure
The conduct of the war.

Rom. Indeed!

Mic. Perhaps
I ope my mind too freely?—it may give
Offence?—I am a plain, unletter'd soldier,
Unused to speak but in unpolish'd phrase
Mine own unpolish'd thoughts.

Rom. Nor am I less
A plain, unletter'd soldier, all unused
To courtly phrase.—I pray you, Sir, speak freely.

Mic. Why then in sober truth it doth appear
This rising discontent hath not sprung up
Without some show of justice. I would seek
To shut mine eyes upon the things, that are,
But 'twill not be—Conviction flashes on me,
And in mine own despite, truth, reason, justice,
Tear back the veil of prejudice. Look round
How chang'd the face this smiling Country wore,
When Xavier's better judgment ruled the State!
Peace then was on the land. Our lusty youth
Follow'd the side-long plough, or trimm'd the vine,
Whilst grey-hair'd Sires approving, blest their labour.
Our village maids . . . . . .

Rom. Nay, an you play the Orator,
You must choose meeter audience than Romano.
But briefly to the point! If evil be,
Where lies the blame of it?

Mic. Upon Montalto
The curse of Rome hath fallen.

Rom. And impiously
Was such a curse pronounced, tho' Rome pronounced it.
Mic. Doth it become us to decry as impious
The judgments of the Church?
Rom. Doth it become
A Soldier, Sir, whose merit is obedience
To make himself a party to such questions?
Ours is a simple duty, nor demands
A nice examination. If our Chiefs
Command our service in th' unrighteous cause,
Our Chiefs shall answer it.—Believe me, Sir,
Theirs is the heavier, and harder task.
Your pardon for my frankness! on that score
I claim a Soldier's priviledge. Good morrow!
[*Exit Romano.*
Mic. Well spoken, Sir, and for thy pains, thy life
Shall pay to-night thy tongue's discourtesy.
Dull Idiot, that I was, to trust me thus
To a fool's countenance.—Methought I spied
Anger and discontent, but ill conceal'd
Beneath that empty smile, and easy bearing:
But he, forsooth, must be Montalto's friend!
Well!—let this nimble-witted Gentleman
Enjoy his shortliv'd triumph. We shall meet
To parley further ere the World's much older.
[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The Ramparts.*

MONTALTO, LAURA, ANTONIO, RIALVO, *& Officers.*

Mont. How proudly doth this antique structure sit
Enthron'd midst darkling woods and steep acclivities,
Seeming to hold by nature's high decree

The sovereign command and mastery
Of all the eye can range upon.
Laur. In truth
A goodly chosen scite!
Ant. Methinks these towers
With battlement and buttress, arch and loop;
Do marvelously well become the spot
On which they rise.
Mont. Most excellently well,
For tho' the fashion of the pile be past,
Like to an ancient, and rich-studded armour,
It wears a form of rude magnificence,
That draws from us involuntary homage.
Your Painter now would spy no blemish here,
Tho' every Soldier whispers our defences
Do bear no head against th' encroaching tide
Of modern science.
Laur. Yet through many an age
Uninjur'd, have they braved the bolts of Heaven,
And War's dread engin'ry.
Mont. And still shall brave them,
But strengthened and secured where weakness lies.
Laur. Are we so weak in our defences, Cousin?
Mont. Not all so weak but we may laugh to scorn
Whate'er rude efforts, the wild warfare here
Can practice, but should foreign wars spring up,
And France pour down her well-train'd legions on us,
Beshrew me it were time the moss-clad walls
Did hide their cumbrous honors behind ramparts
Curtained, and bastion flank'd.
Laur. Must we for ever
Look forward to new Wars?—Knows not ambition

To surfeit on past years of misery?
Well, gracious Heaven be praised, that made me woman;
I fear me I had proved a sorry Soldier.—
Go ye much further?

Mont. Nay but just so far
As may complete the circle of the walls. [longer

Laur. Here then I'll take my leave, nor trespass
Upon your patience with my womanly fears.
I'll to my Cousin Julia, not to fright her
With tales of foreign Wars and weak defences,
But to speak comfort to her aching breast,
Whisper sweet dreams of peace, and happier hours.

[*Exit Laura.*

Mont. It shall become thee well!—
Come Gentlemen!
On to the Southern Angle: I can point
Some further objects to your notice there,
Which may deserve attention. We possess,
An ancient reputation here, for strength,
Which now we find o'erstrained. It were not prudent
To trust to this for safety. We must meet
The march of science with more apt resistance.
Come, Gentlemen! in this you all must aid me.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Lady Julia's Apartment.*

JULIA *reclining on a Couch.—Constantia in attendance.*

Jul. Now, sweet Constantia, touch thy harp again!
There is a soothing magic in thy voice
More potent than all medicine can bestow,
To calm the ruffled spirits; once again

Give utterance to that simple melody
Which charm'd the listening ear beyond the reach
Of strains more learned. In that plaintive air
I catch the sounds, that Childhood's fancy lov'd,
And melt a Child again! I pray thee, sing!

[*Constantia seats herself at the Harp & sings.*

1.

Th' autumnal wind rages, but hope can discern
That the spring in its glory will shortly return,
The Day-star is set in the shadows of night,
But to-morrow will hail it more lovely and bright;
Yet for others these glories; my Spring-time is past,
And the Star of my worship for ever o'ercast.

2.

He swore that his love long as life would endure,
That the Sun was less ardent—the Moon-beam less pure;
But that Moon in its wane saw the passion decay,
And his love, like its shadows, pass fleeting away.
Yet the Cup we prepared, I in sorrow must drain,
Tho' its dregs, and its bitterness only remain,

3.

Must I live to make sport for the thoughtless and gay,
The victim of years for the sins of a day?—
Must the widowed-one pine in oblivion and woe
Whilst the spoiler shines foremost in pageant and show?
Be hush'd rebel spirit!—Submission and pray'r
Are the lot of the guilty! Weep on and despair.

Jul. Thanks, gentle Maid! Is there no more of it?
A strain so sweet, methinks, might be prolong'd
From morn till night, and yet no surfeit taken.

Const. 'Tis an old Song, that in my youth I learnt,
'Twas current then in Cottage as in Palace,
A simple melody, that pleas'd all hearers.
Fame says, a hapless maiden, love-abandoned,
Sung this, and died.

Jul. Is there no more of it?

Const. One couplet still. But Lady Laura comes.

Jul. Nay then we'll sing no more. Leave us Constantia,
At evening, when the bell for vespers tolls,
Be mindful not to fail me in my closet.

Exit Constantia.

Enter LAURA.

Laur. Cousin, methinks, the goodliest furniture,
That decks a Wife's apartment, is here missing.

Jul. How so, sweet Coz?

Laur. Where is thy husband, Julia?

Jul. Gone to the ramparts.

Laur. Gone to the ramparts, Cousin?
So newly met, methinks, his Julia's company
Might offer more attraction.

Jul. Wrong him not;
'Tis scarce an hour since he hath left me, Laura.

Laur. The time is not much older since he came.

Jul. Wouldst make me jealous, Coz, that I should deem
All absence, sin; all wandering thoughts, estrangement?
This must not be.—A mutual confidence
The essence is of Love. The husband feels
Too much, if he feel aught of Hymen's chain;
And sees too much, if he see aught, but flowers
That bind it round: too loving, or too jealous,
Doth wither these, and leave all bare, and naked.
Pardon, sweet Laura, if I deem thy friendship
Something unjust, exacting for my sake,
More than my right may claim.

Laur. Beshrew me, Julia,
None talk of right, who do not feel a wrong.

Love knows not right. What! does the Count Montalto
Trim the nice balance; measure out his kindness
As th' law directs?—Deal out his Love by rule?—
Oh, what a change is here!

Jul. I know no change
Or in Montalto's Love, or warm affection.

Laur. And yet not very far gone by the day,
When the wild fervor of Montalto's Love
Spurn'd at all form, nor brook'd the short delay,
That custom, and the forms of decency
Prescribed, but whilst his benefactor laid
Scarce cold i' th' coffin, deck'd the Church with flowers,
And Requiems mixed with hymeneal music.

Jul. This is not kindly said.

Laur. 'Tis friendship's province
To speak the things, that seeming most unkind
Are wholesome from their bitterness.

Jul. Believe me,
There is no need of this.

Laur. There is no need,
That I should dwell on Count Montalto's virtues,
The busy voice of Fame proclaims them loudly.
My speech, perhaps, had found more favour here,
Had prudence, valour, high and noble bearing,
Fair courtesy and honor been my themes,
For these are virtues, which a liberal world
Gives to thy husband.—But true friendship, Cousin,
Undazzled by the glittering of a name,
Points out the blot, that mars what else were perfect,
And forces Love to gaze on't.

Jul. Forbear, forbear,
This must not be. This fits nor me to hear,
Nor thee to speak. Montalto is my husband:

E'en grant 'twere all, as thou hast painted it,
Are fancied slights, perhaps a hasty word,
Repented as 'tis utter'd, to be set
In competition with a life of kindness?
A moment's pique t' outweigh the work of years,
And make this paradise of love, a hell
Of agony and sorrow?

Laur. Gentle Cousin,
Thy love hath blinded thee.———

Jul. Wouldst have me by an ill-timed jealousy
Give birth to all I dread?—Risk loss of love
By too great fear of losing it?

Laur. I'd have thee
Just, not suspicious; blind, nor to his virtues,
Nor to his faults.

Jul. He has no faults! These eyes
See but perfection in him. Is it mine
To spy out flaws in Nature's masterpiece?
Trace darkling spots upon the glorious Sun,
That gilds and gladdens all my path of life!
Oh no, no, no!———

Laur. This is most admirable!—Yet Montalto . . . . .

Enter MONTALTO.

Mont. Comes aptly to th' appeal—what of Montalto?

Julia. Didst thou then hear . . . . . .

Mont. Would 't please thee, I were deaf?
But to the point!—What of Montalto, Cousin?

Laur. Those, who are ever foremost in our hearts,
Are foremost in our speech. The mind will dwell
On those it cherishes, and the full soul
Flies to the readiest organ.

Mont. Out upon thee!
Why thou hast learn't to flatter, gentle Lady,

And in no vulgar strain. What smooth-tongued Cour-
Hath in my absence school'd thee to this pitch? [tier
Mark how my Julia's silence would reprove
These idle vanities!—

Jul. Not so, Montalto,
If Laura's tongue more aptly spoke, I pray thee
Think not less kindly of my Love.

Mont. Less kindly;
Not for the wealth of worlds! thinking of thee
Is thinking of all truth, all kindliness;
And the heart needs must mirror back such feeling,
And the tongue needs must speak it.

Laur. Excellent! [shall'd?
What smooth-tongued Courtier hath thy phrases mar-
The Camp-bred soldier too can teach his tongue
To bandy nonsense in a lady's chamber.

Mont. Now ill befall the spirit that would tax
Th' o'erflowings of the heart with flattery.
Rebuke her Love! Sweet Julia, chide thy Cousin,
That she should dare to hold the bliss, we feel,
A meteor, flattery-fed, and fleeting too
E'en as the words that raised it.

Laura. Art thou mad?
Spoke I like this?

Mont. Nay, had I built my hopes
On shallow smiles, and pretty dimpled looks
Caught by the sparkling of a pair of eyes,
Or the gold meshes of love-tangled hair,
I too had haply number'd with the men,
Whom witlings smile to meet, and ladies' eyes
Pursue 'twixt pity and derision. Other [not,
And surer guides were mine.—Sweet smiles I scorn'd
Nor eyes like diamonds, nor love-tangled hair,

But 'twas the Heaven, that brighten'd in those smiles,
The virtue, that outshone those diamonds' lustre,
The modesty, that braided up those locks,
That led Love captive.—Julia! hast forgotten
That long delicious evening, when we sat
Upon the terrace, that o'erlook'd the Brenta,
Thy Father pacing slowly to and fro,
As loth to interrupt us?—When I spoke
For the first time of love?
By Heaven it moves her!—*(aside)*

Jul. Oh those were happy days!

Mont. The days of hope!
We thought not then of gathering ills; we saw
A goodly world before us, and traced out
The path, where pleasure pointed. Those indeed,
Were happy days!

Jul. They were so!

Mont. Yet methinks,
They should not be regretted.—We have drank
Deep of the cup of bliss, but sorrow yet
Hath mixed no bitter with the draught.—The cup
Still sparkles, Julia!—still runs brimming o'er!
Thou weep'st!—

Laur. What idle thoughts are these. Bear up, sweet
He would but try our patience— [Cousin,

Mont. Weep not Love!
We should be joyous in our golden hours!
'Twere folly thus to let imagination
With loosened rein press onward to the goal,
Where guilt, remorse, and misery avail us!

Jul. Forbid it Heaven!—forgive these idle tears—
I have no cause for grief!

Mont. None, Julia, none,

If bliss be measured by a husband's love.

Laur. What other standard knows she?—Fye, Mon-
That "if" came coldly in, as tho' a doubt [talto,
Linger'd behind, that shrunk from utterance.
Rouze not the green-eyed Monster; once at large,
Thou shallt not cage him readily.

Jul. Cease, cease!—
Argue not wrongly of these tears, Montalto,
Nor place them to a count I ill could brook,
They should be found on. 'Tis a woman's weakness,
Whose fancy kept on an unnatural stretch
By never-ending absence, vibrates thus
To the first touch of feeling.———

Laur. How like to two spoilt infants, idly bent,
Quarrelling from very wantonness is this!—
Banish these sad discourses, Julia!—Dwell
On themes more fitting to thy prosperous fortunes.
Fair subjects shall not lack.—Thy Lord's high deeds—
Those smiling babes, sweet pledges of your loves—
If these content thee not, then shame Montalto,
With Count Bassano's gallantries.

Mont. Bassano's!

Laur. What though Montalto hie him to the wars,
Reckless of those, who better might have claimed
His presence, still there are, who know to value
The treasures left behind!

Mont. The Count Bassano!—
A gallant soldier, a most noble gentleman,
Albeit mine enemy.

Laur. Yet hath he played
No hostile part by us. Fruits of all kinds,
The richest and the fairest, sends he here
In gallant mood to grace thy Lady's table.

Mont. This is most strange!—Come letters with these gifts?

Laur. Beleaguered round by hostile armaments
Perchance (so runs the scroll) the Lady Countess
May from these rugged mountains sigh to think
On all her happier, native plains afford.
Bassano wars not with the fair, but sends
An offering of peace.

Mont. You sent it back?

Jul. Not so, my Lord.

Laur. What churlish act were this?
Ill merited were such uncourtly dealing.
A herald spoke our thanks, and our acceptance.

Mont. But no acquaintance justified the gift—
Thou ne'er hast known this man?

Jul. Some eight years back,
When adverse fortune bade my Father seek
A refuge in Verona, Count Bassano
Was evermore our guest. My Father loved
And honored him; but hasty words at length
Arose between them, and estrangement followed—
I never have beheld him from that hour.

Mont. This is the very strangest tale, that tongue
E'er labour'd with!—Gifts are from love, or friendship,
And the accepter in the acceptance pledges
An equal faith in either.—He, that holds
My gifts, is bound in friendship to me.—She
Who smiles upon the offerings, that reveal
Attention to her wants, or wayward fancies
Smiles upon love!—
'Tis there! 'tis there the blot!—
There lurks the poison of this sickening tale! *(aside.)*

Enter Officer.

Off. My Lord, the Banquet is prepared; the guests
Assembled in the Hall await your coming.

Mont. Say, I'll be with them straight!

Exit Officer.

Come, Julia, deck
That lovely face with smiles.—Wipe off the trace
Of those ill-boding tears, mis-judging men
Might place to sorrow's score—'Tis thine to speak
Fair greetings to our guests; to give that welcome,
Which is the Hostess' chief prerogative,
And kindliest duty. Lacking of thy smiles
The costliest viands were but common food;
The softest music but unmeaning noise;
The generous goblet, flat and spiritless!
Come, cheer thee! cheer thee!—let not malice say
A clouded brow has marr'd a festal day.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Gallery in the Castle.*

Folding doors in the back scene, supposed to lead to the Apartment of the Countess.

LAURA *(reading a Letter.)*

(Reads.)

" Be cautious not to make the lure too strong;
" For doing so, our quarry shall escape us.
" Be vague in accusation, hinting much,
" Affirming nothing. Throw him but a clue
" And let imagination work the rest."

Thus have I done, and eagerly he takes
The poisoned chalice, tho' the draught be death.
So blindly doth he rush upon destruction,
'Twould seem he played in concert for his ruin.

(Reads.)

" If he should give at once into the snare,
" Our game is certain. By the means, thou knowest,
" Advise me of his coming. That same night,
" For all delay is dangerous, prepare
" The signal we agreed on"

Be it so!
To-night it shall be done—

(Reads.)

" So may we speed
" As thou dost wish: This nothing doubtful of,
" Bassano's gratitude outruns thy favors."

Here then, Montalto, ends thy proud career!
She, who was spurn'd heart-broken from thy arms,

Robbed of her birth-right, cheated of her honors,
Shall do herself that justice, Heaven denies.
If there be yet within this labouring breast
Some female weakness, which may shame my purpose,
Pluck it, ye Dæmons! from me. Let my wrongs
Live in my memory 'till this full soul
Be glutted with its vengeance. No, Montalto!
I was not formed to be the gadding thing
To move and gambol at another's beck,
The play thing of the day, or the convenience.
Nature ne'er fashioned out a soul like mine
To grovel with the herd of human kind
In base equality. The stamp of greatness
E'en from my cradle, mark'd me for renown,
And I had stood pre-eminent in virtue
As now . . . . . but blotted be that thought for ever!—
Thou, thou, alone hast will'd it so, Montalto!
The golden visions of my youth are blasted,
And Laura lives but to ensure her vengeance!

[*Exit.*

Enter Antonio *and* Rialvo.

Ri. Here let us wait his coming.

Ant. Be it so;
He cannot choose but pass to reach his chamber,
An he be not retired.

Ri. I saw him pacing
The Hall of Audience, as we cross'd the Court.
And see the light gleaming from yonder Oriel;
The Lady Julia keeps her vigils still.

Ant. 'Tis past a doubt that there is mischief brewing
I marvel how he will receive the tale. [it?

Ri. Why in good part. How else should he receive

Ant. I know not. Something has occur'd to move him
Strangely beside himself. I' th' Camp, I hear
His coming is unknown.

Ri. 'Tis said so.

Ant. Nay,
'Tis certain.

Ri. Didst thou note him at the Banquet?
His haggard looks?—his starts?

Ant. I mark'd him well.

Ri. He spoke not, or but spoke to ask some question
Wide from the purpose. If perchance he smiled,
'Twas in such sort as but more plainly proved
Some secret anguish preyed upon his fancy.
There's mystery in this.

Ant. I like it not.
Methought he spoke the Lady Julia harshly.

Ri. He did—yet she for ever strove to smile,
As seeming loth to own her Lord's unkindness.
But see, a light moves this way. Some one comes.

Enter JULIA.

Ant. Heaven save the Lady Julia!

Jul. Good Antonio·
My thanks attend thee. Now what would ye, Gentlemen
At this unusual hour? Is there aught
Within the scope of my ability,
Where I may do ye service?

Ri. Noble Lady,
We wait the Count Montalto.

Jul. Worthy friends!
I would that ye might find him in the mood
To listen to your errand, but I fear me
It may not prove so. He is greatly moved

By something, that hath chanced. Perhaps a change
In friendship thought unalterable; or
A lack of means for greater enterprize;
Something, I know not what, that he hath found
On Fortune's checquered map, hath moved him
strangely.

Ri. An over-ardent fancy sometimes lends
Strange consequence to trifles

Jul. Truly Sir,
I do believe me thou hast guess'd it rightly,
For as in richest soils rank weeds grow up
Most readily, so doth Montalto's mind
Nourish strange fancies, which his better judgment
Shall soon root ~~up~~ out.

Ant. The tender cares of love
Will minister the kindliest comfort to him. [prayers

Jul. May gracious Heaven so will it!—To your
I do commend me, gentlemen!—Good night!
[*Exit Julia.*

Ant. May guardian Angels, watch your slumbers,
Lady!
Didst thou observe with what a holy art
She sought to hide the unkindness of Montalto?

Ri. I did.

Ant. Heaven shower its choicest blessings on her!
So sweet a spirit in so fair a form
Is rarely given to walk this nether earth

Ri. A jewel of this value should be prized
Above all reck'ning. There are those, whose beauty
Is but a curs'd and sorry gift, to light
Perpetual broils, and discord; baleful planets,
Whose fiery brightness teems with pestilence,
And ills unheard of. Here it is a gift,

Worthy th' Almighty giver.
Ant. Sir, she holds
Hereditary right to our respect.
A braver soldier, a more upright gentleman,
I ne'er encounter'd than this Lady's Father.
I knew him well, Rialvo—loved him well,
And wept him with that bitterness of grief,
Affections dearest tribute.
Ri. Hark! He comes,
He mounts the stair—his pages all sent back.—
Ant. Alone!—'tis well.
Ri. Stand back! stand back, Antonio!

MONTALTO *enters slowly and without perceiving the foregoing.*

Mont. He knew her at Verona ere her marriage,
And I remember now, was spoken of
As her admirer. Loveliness so rare
Need only to be seen, to be adored,
And he did bask him in her beauty's blaze
In unrestricted liberty, as fitted
The Father's guest. Now with what busy malice
Doth memory reach these seeming trifles
To drive the hesitating soul to madness!
Ri. He heeds us not!———
Ant. Be still! 'Twere better we did not disturb him.
Mont. Th' o'erbearing of her Father's temper
Did fix a quarrel on him. What of that?
The daughter may have loved him. Nay! did love him,
And I have borne another's cast off suit.
Nay proudly borne it in the face of day,
Whilst taunting mockery in secret smiled,
And noted down my shame! Was it for this

I shrined this lovely jewel in my heart,
And prized it as the choicest gift of fortune?
Oh woman, woman, frail, perfidious sex,
First curs'd, tho' last created, how shall Man
Trace thee thro' all the mazes of thy wickedness?
Who would have told that on that fragrant lip
Seduction's venomous breath had hung its poison?
Who would have read the wanton in that eye,
Or in the honied utterance of that voice
Have caught the accent of dishonesty?
Oh Julia! Julia!

[*perceives the Officers.*

How now! who dares to break upon my leisure,
Unasked, unlook'd for?

Ri. Pardon, good my Lord,
But we have that may justify th' intrusion.

Mont. Be it of business, I'll none of it—
The acrid humours are afloat within me,
Nor can I look so calmly upon things,
As in my better hours. Tonight to rest;
Tomorrow to our duties.

Ri. Nay, tonight,
Upon the hour my Lord must give us hearing.

Mont. Is it so pressing?

Ri. As the lives of those,
Whom most you love, are dear to you.

Mont. Indeed!

Ri. Treason's on foot!

Mont. On foot then let it be;
What should I fear from treason?

Ri. Every thing!

Ant. Remember ere the Ides of March began
The god-like Cæsar was forewarn'd, but spurn'd

The friendly counsel.

Mont. How, Antonio too?
Well, well, unburthen thee, nor let thy words
Stray from the purpose. To the point and briefly!

Ri. Then thus it stands my Lord.—The Count
Bassano . . . .

Mont. Curses light on him! canst thou choose no [name
To grace thy tale but that?—At every turn
That spectre crosses me. Well, Sir; speak on!

Ri. The Count Bassano then, my Lord, who lies
Encamp'd at no great distance from our walls,
Holds secret correspondence with the Castle.

Mont. How learnt you this?—be brief!

Ri. It was remark'd
By those on guard, that often as the Sun
Shed its last glories from yon western hill,
A menial of the Castle passed the moat,
Nor was observed returning. So repeated,
These tardy wanderings begot mistrust.
Report was instant made—Antonio and myself
(Stirr'd on perhaps, by motives not more pure,
Than curiosity) resolved unseen
To follow on his steps.—A spy was set
To watch his motions, thus forewarned, at sunset
We saw him pass.—By wild, untrodden paths,
And secret windings little known to us,
He gained a low, half-ruin'd hovel, built
Upon the summit of yon hanging precipice,
That shuts the northern prospect from the view.
He enter'd cautiously, closing with care
The cottage door, as fearful of intrusion.
An hour went by, but yet he came not forth—
Another past—Impatient of delay,

We forced an entry—O'er a dying fire
Sat an old beldame, such a wither'd wretch,
So misery-worn, these eyes ne'er gazed upon,
To questions gently proferr'd, and fair phrases,
She muttered answers of I know not what,
Vague, and evasive, but when urged by threats
Confess'd the traitor had but past her cottage,
Taking a secret path, that winds around
Th' impending mountain tow'rds Bassano's camp.
She said, her cottage oftentimes was made
The place of meeting for exchange of letters . . .

Mont. Letters!—Art sure of this?—Spoke she of letters?—

Ri. This morn, my Lord, Letters were thus exchanged;

And further, said she, some short time gone by,
A beauteous Lady came . . . . .

Mont. Oh no! not came?—
Did she so far outstrip the bounds of modesty?
Run tilting in the open blaze of day
For fools to gaze at?—No! she dared not do it—
Thou wouldst deceive me, Villain!—

Ri. Nay, my Lord,
This wrongs me.

Mont. Wrongs thee! In this treacherous world
Who is not wrong'd?—Is it the gorgeous Prince,
Whose flattery-fed imagination glutted
With honied lies, leads him awhile to doubt
If he be God, or man?—Is it the hind,
Who sows the harvest, which his betters feed on?
Is it the wretch, who starves on hoarded heaps
A spendthrift heir shall squander? Is it the husband,
Who fondly trusting to a woman's smiles,

Believes the solitary phœnix his,
Nor dreams, that he is cozened?—But proceed—
A Lady came, thou saidst?
Ri. She did, my Lord.
Mont. Nay, then, 'tis past a doubt. Honor and love,
Duty, affection, who shall boast ye more?
If she be false, whom Nature formed so fair,
Where shall we look for virtue?
Ant. The Lady Laura . . . . . .
Mont. Fool! the Lady Julia.
Ant. I would have said . . . . . .
Mont. That women are all false,
Deceitful, perjured, fickle, and perfidious:
Truth, constancy, and love mere words of sound,
Honor an empty boast, a dream, a phantom,
A mockery, an idle cozenage;
This, this, thou wouldst have said, and pointed out
The Victim here!—
Ant. In very truth, not I.
No thoughts were further from my mind than these—
Ri. Have patience, good my Lord!
Mont. Then give me back
The jewel, I entrusted to your care,
Pure and unsullied, as I left it with you,
Give it me back, or by the Host of Heaven
Your lives shall answer it.
Ri. To us a jewel!
Ant. What jewel means my Lord?
Mont. A Jewel man!
Which not the orient blaze of Persia's throne,
Not all the fabled wealth of further Ind,
Had purchased from me—'Twas my amulet,
My talisman, my charm 'gainst every evil;

Life of my life; my soul's far dearer part—
Alas! Seduction's breath has blown upon it,
And now it mocks the keeping!—

Ant. Be calm, my Lord; from over-anxious zeal
We may have erred;—'This must be sifted further—
The Lady Laura has a handmaid called
Biancha, in Bassano's Camp her brother . . . . . .

Mont. So deeply laid! Oh Woman! Woman! Woman!

Ri. This maybe short of treason, my good Lord.

Mont. Aye, but it also may be more than treason
[*recovering himself.*
Your pardon, Sirs, I have been strangely moved,
And I do fear me, passion has pronounced
What cooler judgment fain would have recall'd.
Unlook'd-for grief drives Reason from her seat
And masters utterance.—Forgive, and leave me!

Ri. If it so please you, double guards shall watch.

Mont. Oh no! we need nor guards, nor chains, nor locks,
These are no safety 'gainst a woman's wiles;
For if she will go wrong (and when she will not
'Tis an extravagance of Nature, not
Her genuine creation) rack thy brain,
Heap art on art, call Satan to thine aid,
With devilish invention and deep cunning
She'll mock ye all, effecting her lewd purposes
Tho' Hell be leagued against her!—But enough!
Get ye to bed, and take no further heed
Of what has passed between us—Double no guard,
Nor make a show of fear; but let all be,
As all is wont to be. To bed—to bed—
[*Exeunt Rialvo and Antonio.*
Thus burst the air-blown bubble of my happiness!
Domestic peace, heart-felt content, Love, confidence,

All, all the tender and endearing links,
That bind mankind to life, are rent for ever!—
This spacious world is now an empty void,
Without a spot, on which my soul can rest
To soothe its sorrows. Honor has lost its end;
Ambition its incentive; Life its charm.
I know nor good, nor evil more—Henceforward
All is indifferent to me——Julia!—Julia!—
This is her Chamber!——All is still within—
Silent as death! Now is it God or Devil,
That stirs within me, prompting me to that
I dare not utter?

[*Opens the Chamber door.*

So!—She sleeps! Sleeps soundly!—
The weight of her dishonesty doth press
But lightly on her; conscious innocence
Knows not a sweeter slumber!—Oh! it makes
The sickening Soul recoil, Religion's self
Grow sceptical, when one so fondly loved,
When one so blindly worshipp'd, turns aside
Reckless from where the purest incense burns
To breathe pestiferous offerings from the shrine
Of lustful passion!—Oh 'tis foul, 'tis foul,
And cries for vengeance!—Pity here were weakness.
She that is merciless, shall know no mercy!—

[*Draws his dagger, and rushes into the Chamber. After a pause, returns pale and trembling.*

I dare not do it as she sleeps, that were
A coward's act; so tranquil were her slumbers,
Whilst hovering Vengeance poised the thirsty steel,
I had been twice a murderer to kill her.

The gentle power, that weigh'd her eye-lids down,
Seem'd, but the image of that longer sleep
That waits us all, and thus beholding it,
My purpose died within me. I had kiss'd her,
But the remembrance, that those lips were common
To me and to Bassano, cross'd my thought
And stopt the course of pity. As she slept,
Methought she smiled!—she smiled!—not for me;
No, no, her ardent and adulterous fancy
Pictured Bassano's presence: the soft tear,
That hung upon her cheek, was but the sign
Of visioned bliss, that I was stranger to:
Her bosom heav'd, as on Bassano's breast;
Her lips but answer'd to Bassano's kisses;
Her arms . . . . but why play braggart with my [tongue
When this may rid me of a load of agony?—
Come friendly weapon!—Heaven hear her not!
Gape for thy victim, Hell! and guide my vengeance!

[*As he rushes to the door, it is thrown open by Julia, in her night dress, a taper in her hand. He lets fall the dagger, and turns from her.*

Jul. Montalto!

Mont. Speak not in this tone, Julia!

Jul. Nor turn thy face away.—What ails my Lord?

Mont. Nothing!—a very trifle.

Jul. Nothing!—indeed!

And does Montalto shun his Julia's bed
To hold strange converse with himself for nothing?
Does nothing knit his brow, and make him start,
As frighted by some horrible conception,
Born of a restless spirit, and heated fancy?
To day thy words were wrapt in mystery,
Willing, methought, a meaning should be guess'd at,
Thou daredst not utter. Often too thine eye

Was bent on empty air, seeming to seek
What it were most unwilling to have found.
That eye spoke volumes. 'Tis a fearful nothing,
That moves thee thus.

Mont. I thought that thou didst sleep.

Jul. 'Twas rightly guess'd.

Mont. Didst thou hear nothing?

Jul. Nothing.
The night's unkindly, and the boisterous wind
Sings with unusual rudeness round these towers.
The rack of Heaven flies past the sickly moon,
And the dun bird of night's prophetic voice
Gives notice of the storm: 'tis a wild night,
And menacing!—Yet I but slept the sounder.

Mont. All wild without, within all calm and sunshine!
Nor dreams, nor inward whisperings disturb'd thee?

Jul. I had no dreams, but dreams of happiness;
Nor visions, whisperings, thoughts, but of Montalto.
'Twas still on Love and all its attributes,
My wandering fancy ran, as joy and hope,
And confidence; bliss mutual, mutual cares;
Nor were our babes, sweet innocents, forgotten:
These were not themes to frighten or disturb.
Thy voice recalled me from a fairy land,
Where the pleased fancy rested with delight.
And quitted sorrowing.—Willt thou to-bed,
The night wears rapidly?

[*Advancing towards him, strikes her foot against the dagger, which she takes up.*

What's here, a dagger?

Mont. Give it me back: 'tis mine.

Jul. Thine, thine, Montalto?

Mont. Give it me.

Jul. To arm thee 'gainst thyself?
Oh what a train of black and horrible thoughts
Come rushing on my soul!—
Mont. What may this mean?
Give me the dagger, Julia!—
Jul. Never!—Away
Hell-furnish'd instrument, whose envious point
Would pierce a heart too noble for this world.
'Twas this thy looks foretold. Oh speak, Montalto
What can have moved thy manly soul to this?
Mont. Julia, thou art deceived . . . .
Jul. Deceived!—look on me!—
Nay, turn not thus away. When hast thou fear'd
To meet thy Julia's gaze? That eagle-eye,
Which never yet has shrunk from mortal glance,
Dares not encounter mine. Speak, speak, Montalto!
Speak to thy friend, thy wife!—
Mont. To thee!
Jul. To Julia,
Who else shall share thy griefs, but she, whose oaths
Are register'd in heaven to share them with thee?
Who else shall weep with thee?—Drop tears of blood,
If thy heart bleed, Montalto?—Dost thou fear
A woman's weakness, and a lack of courage?
Be undeceived!—I may be mild and gentle,
As fits a woman, when her fortunes smile,
But I can bear with sorrow, as becomes
Montalto's wife.
Mont. Well is it for thee, Julia!
Well is it for thee! Conscious innocence
Speaks in no bolder strain, nor fronts suspicion
With loftier tone. Why not?—Thou art heart-whole,
Ungall'd by conscience, and canst bear thee up
As fits Montalto's wife.

Jul. I would draw meaning from this coil of words
Could reason do 't, for to the idle air
Montalto is not wont to throw out sounds
For expectation to grow sick upon.
Something of doubt I gather from thy speech,
But doubt of what?—Of Julia?—of thy Wife?
I will not wrong thee by so foul a thought.
Or of thy friends? I'll dare be sworn they're stedfast.
Or is't belike, that thou hast brought with thee
Ill tidings from the war, such as thy love
Hath not yet dared to utter? Aye, is't so?
Has thou lost all? Thy friends all slain, or taken;
Thy army clean dispersed, and nothing left
But thy good sword, this Castle, and thyself?
Is't so!—thy hand!—dost feel me tremble?

Mont. Julia!
My friends are stedfast, and my army stands
Unbroken, unassailable. That way
There lies no doubt!

Jul. Where lies it then, Montalto?
Darest thou not speak it?—No?—Not to thy wife?
Had I been told, that I should see the day
Montalto would reject his Julia's prayer,
And selfish in his sorrow, brood alone
Unmindful of her pangs, how had I chidden
The slanderer of my Lord? I would have said
That love and confidence go hand-in-hand,
And that to grieve alone, as to rejoice,
Argued a lack of both.

Mont. A lack of love!
Thou dared'st not think it. The Arch-fiend himself
Had ventur'd not to whisper it—had held,
The falsehood monstrous. Had I lack'd of love

I had lack'd being! 'Twas existence self;
The atmosphere in which I breathed, and failing
I too had perished. Thou alone, thou, Julia .....
Jul. What dreadful tale chokes up thy labouring speech,
And checks the utterance, that thou wouldst give it?
Is it thy manly soul would bear alone
The weight of woe, or is thy Julia deem'd
Unworthy of the trust? Oh fear me not!
I seek not to extort thy secret from thee.
I would stand debtor to thy love for confidence,
But only to thy love.
Mont. Am I spell bound?
Entranced?—the music of her voice unmans me,
Even to very childishness.
Jul. Thou weep'st!
Nay seek not to conceal it. Oh forgive,
If anxious love in its mistaken zeal
Hath questioned thee too rudely. Women's tears
Are lightly shed, more lightly still forgotten,
But when the tear is seen on manhood's cheek
Oh it doth argue such a sum of wretchedness,
As spurns at comfort, and all soothing words
Are but a mockery of grief! Forgive me!
I was indeed to blame!

[*takes his hand.*

What fever's here!
With what unnatural haste the stream of life
Runs boiling thro' thy veins, as tho' 'twould burst
The channel, and give out its rich exuberance
To the deep blushing earth!—Alas! alas!
This is no passing ailing of light cure
An hour gets rid of. This is deep-seated, love!

Body and mind unhinged!—both, both, Montalto!
Exhausted nature must have rest and quiet.

Mont. (striking his breast.)

'Tis here!—but it will pass, like all things else.
Anon I shall be well again.

Jul. To rest!

Thou must indeed to rest. Bear up, Montalto!
If Julia be thy nurse, thy pillow's guardian,
What shouldst thou fear? The dark and evil spirits
Born of the night, that haunt the sick man's chamber,
Guiding the subtle workings of the brain
To dreams of desperation, ever fly
The couch, that true love watches. Nought shall stir,
No sound be heard, that may disturb thy slumbers.
If sighs escape, they shall be gently breathed;
If tears o'erflow, they shall fall silently;
If prayers arise, they shall be whisper'd forth
Unheard of mortal ears. ——
Nay turn not from me, Love!—Be ruled in this.
Some hours of sleep and thou art well again.
Thou must indeed to rest! Nay, come Montalto!
I'll lead thee to thy chamber, come! come! come!

(she leads him slowly out.)

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Corridor in the Castle.*

Stage darkened.

Michael.

The noisy merriment at length has ceased,
And all seems hush'd to rest. I almost feared
Suspicion was awake: these tardy hours
And long protracted revels are unusual.
The Banquet-Room stands open; from the Gallery
I can perceive, that all are stolen away
Save five or six, worn out by the debauch,
Who roll their listless lengths upon the pavement.
The glimmering flame, that plays around the sockets
Of the almost expiring lamps, gives light
Too feeble to allow the distant eye,
To trace the half-hid features, or the forms
Of these besotted fools. My brother loathes
The generous goblet, else suspicion points
Tow'rds him, as of them. Conscience stricken cowards
In desperate cases have been known to borrow
That courage from their cups, their hearts deny,
But 'tis as easy to exceed the point
Of courage, as to hit it, and excess
Defeats its proper object.———
What if he play us false?—th' advancing clock
Steals nimbly past the hour, he should be here.

Perhaps . . . . but no! he dare not play the Traitor;
Love and Ambition make him ours, and Hell
Can tempt no more, if these can tempt in vain.

Enter DURAZZO.

Who's there?

Dur. A man, whose actions need the veil
Of night, 'tis Treason only walks abroad
At such an hour.

Mic. A friendly voice!—Durazzo!

Dur. Even he!

Mic. Already from the northern tower
Beams the bright star, that guides our fortune to us,

Dur. Is the lamp lit?

Mic. Full half an hour our friends
Have hailed the promised signal.

Dur. Those, who came
This morning from the Camp, did hold their fellows
In such attention to their wond'rous tales
Of hair breadth 'scapes and perilous enterprize
That they forgot to count the nimble clock,
And over-staid the hour, they're wont to separate.
Had I come sooner, it had been observed.

Mic. 'Twas rightly done. Within the Castle walls
Is all at rest?

Dur. All's silent as the grave!
The watchful Sentinel with weary step
Treading his tedious round, alone is heard
To break the general stillness. Gentle sleep
Hath closed the eyes of all, save those who wake
For treason, or for sorrow.

Mic. Didst thou pass
Montalto's chamber?

Dur. Aye, and I did think
I heard a voice within. I stopp'd to listen
But all was still again. The secret door
Of the small Chapel, that adjoins the chamber
Stood half unclosed. A female figure knelt
Before the altar: 'twas the Countess Julia.
She prayed, and I alas! . . . . . .

Mic. And if she did?

Dur. I would I could pray too!

Mic. A sorry wish,
Unworthy of Durazzo.

Dur. I remember,
There was a time, I never closed my eyes
'Till I had pour'd my grateful thanks to Heaven!
I could sleep soundly then.

Mic. Durazzo!———

Dur. Now
Repose hath fled my pillow. I would weep
But tears too are denied me.

Mic. Courage man!
Be not cast down: our harvest is secure.

Dur. The harvest sown in guilt, is reap'd in sorrow!

Mic. Be still!

Dur. What heard'st thou?

Mic. Some one comes!

Dur. Where?

Mic. Listen!
Heard'st thou not footsteps in the Gallery?

Enter Laura.

Laur. Well met! well met!

Mic. Most aptly come, fair Lady,
To hear this Casuist, this trembling moralist,

Armed at all points with weighty apophthegms,
Confound his daring at an hour like this.

Laur. Go to! thou wrong'st thy brother. Speak Durazzo.

Dur. 'Tis not my daring that's confounded, Laura;
Could fancy picture to this troubled mind
A death more terrible, than man's invention,
Apt in the school of cruelty, has yet
Created for the torment of his fellow,
For thee I'd meet it unappall'd; for thee,
Be all . . . . . .

Laur. But grateful!

Dur. Touch not on that chord,
If thou would'st keep me thine. Touch not that chord,
It vibrates here too deeply; touch not there.

Mic. And is this debt of gratitude so great,
That nought can cancel it?—On what is founded
This endless obligation, that thou owest?
Montalto made thee rich, and calls thee friend,
Thus for some paltry ducats, and a score
Of soothing words, thou'rt sold to him for ever!
Nay gild it, as thou wilst, thou'rt sold, tho' courtesy
Has graced such bargains with the name of gratitude. .
But bear in mind, Durazzo, if another
More liberal than Montalto, heap upon thee
A double share of wealth, thou'llt stand indebted
In two-fold gratitude. Where he gave ease,
She will give affluence. Where he bestowed
An honorable service, She will give
Command!—

Laur. If weight of benefits may claim
Thy gratitude, it cannot but be mine.

Dur. Sweet Laura, tempt me not! The golden fruit,

That I would reach, is still beyond my grasp.
Has Hell not lent it colours fair enough,
But that thy syren voice must urge me on
To my soul's ruin?

Laur. Now what words are these,
When labouring time gives forth the goodly birth,
Our wit engender'd?—Wouldst thou fail me now,
E'en on fruition's eve?—Out on thy cowardice!—
If thou wouldst serve Montalto, speak it freely;
Rack not thy brain to justify thy treachery.

Dur. I would serve both.

Laur. Thou canst not. Far opposed
As jarring elements, as fire and water,
Montalto's cause and mine. Thou hast my secret;
Incautious love hath armed thee 'gainst itself,
And treacherously wouldst thou profit by it!—

Mic. Go! make a merit of repentance; draw
Destruction on thy brother, wife, and infant!—
But will this act redeem thy tarnish'd honor,
Restore thee in the scoffing world's opinion?
Mark'd as the fool, who would, but dared not, strike,
Virtue shall mock thy tardy penitence;
And even Vice, exulting in thy fall,
Shall fly thee as a pestilence, for treachery
Hath not an advocate in Heaven or Hell! [self,

Dur. What power is this, more strong than reason's
Usurps my soul, and wrings from me consent
To deeds, that . . . . but no matter! I am thine,
Thine, by this steel, which never shall uphold
The righteous cause again; thine, though th' abyss
Should gape beneath my feet! The link between us
Shall be cemented with thy kindred blood;
Tears, groans, and sighs, our hymeneal music;

Our trappings, dead men's spoils; our bridal bed
Thy house's sepulchre! Give me thine hand—
This be my pledge of faith. When next we meet . . .

Laur. Wealth, honors . . . . . .

Dur. And remorse are ours for ever! [*Exit.*

Mic. Nay follow on his steps! Each moment brings
Bassano to the walls, then all is won.

[*Exit Laura.*

Ill-sorted pair! Yet from this union springs
Michaels's best hopes, and fairest chance of fortune.
The labour their's; the harvest mine; e'en so,
Wit ever reaps, whatever hand may sow!

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The Great Hall of the Castle.*

[*A long pause.—By degrees a confused noise is heard—Soldiers pass and repass the Stage—cries are heard and martial music*

Rom. (speaking behind the scenes.)
To th' walls! to th' walls!—no time for marshalling
In well-trimmed ranks of war. Each to the post,
Where individual valour best may serve!

(Enters, followed by Soldiers.)
Heavens, what a lazy watch was here observed
To let the enemy thus steal upon us!—
Hence to the eastern turret, hurry down
The idle loiterers there!—To arms! to arms!
Rouze up the slumberers!—speed thou to Conrad,
Raymondi, and San Marco!—Bid them muster
Their archers in the court—ring the alarum!
Where are our banners hid?—

Let them fly out, and bid the brazen trumpets
Breathe forth a loud defiance!—
Who shall excuse
This fatal want of caution to Montalto?

Sold. Nay, call it by its true name, treachery.
No enemy had reach'd the walls unnoticed,
Had all been true within.

Ri. Go to! go to!—
Who should be traitor here? beshrew me, man;
An overweaning confidence hath drawn
These wolves upon us. Where the fold is weak,
Or negligently guarded, even thus
The vagrants of the field will risk a venture.

(noise encreases.)

But hark!—By heaven, I almost could believe
The outer wall were gained! 'Tis as I thought!
Look from the window here, how the court fills
With runaways!—all roughly handled too—
Their shattered mail betrays it—Eight or ten
Seem sorely wounded!

Sold. Here comes one in haste
Shall tell us more.

Enter Soldier.

Ri. How now, whence come you fellow?

2nd Sold. Antonio sends for succour.

Ri. Heaven forbid!
Is the press such that he can hold no longer?

2nd Sold. Near the north gate outnumber'd by the
His feeble ranks can scarce maintain the battle. [foe,

Ri. Back then with all, who rally in the court,
Bid him be of good cheer, bravely bear up

'Till we can draw together such a force
As shall make deep repentance clog the march
Of this rash enterprize. Hence to the walls!
Romano and myself will muster here
A fresher band, and join him on the instant.

[*Exit Soldier.*

Enter ROMANO.

Rom. Stand you thus idle here, when th' Enemy
So loudly at our gates?—Away, away, [knocks
To th' ramparts!

Ri. Aye, to the ramparts, but in force
To do good service there, and not to waste
Our scattered strength by piece-meal. Yet a moment,
And those off guard will muster in the court
A goodly force, wherewith to aid Antonio
With hope of 'vantage.

Rom. Be it so! meanwhile
I go to silence yon loud clamourers,
But see, Antonio comes, all spent and bruised,
This gallant veteran shames our younger mettles.

Enter ANTONIO.

Ant. All's lost! — betray'd! — Durazzo and his brother,
Leagued with Bassano, fight in th' Enemy's ranks!

Ri. Is't possible?

Rom. May light'nings blast the Traitors!

Ant. All, all is given up!—the foe has all—
The northern gate, th' advanced works, and the bastion,
All these were yielded ere we doubted treachery.
Some twenty men stood faithful—What were these
To stem th' accumulating host?—A moment

We held the torrent back; it gather'd stronger;
Durazzo led their battle; and our bravest
Fled from th' unequal conflict!

Ri. Cursed race!
Infernal treason!

Rom. Does our cause depend
Upon a rebel's arm? Out with your rapiers!
And to the walls, there let us face the traitor
Until he shrink abash'd at the remembrance
Of his unnatural guilt—Up! up! awake!
Ring the alarum! louder, louder yet!
Ring till the gathering troop be all assembled,
Our castle's utmost force. To arms! to arms!
Shall we be palsied by a rebel's treason.

Enter Montalto.

Mont. Speak! in the name of heaven, what means this uproar?
Why are we frighted from our peaceful beds
At such an hour?

Ri. The Castle is attack'd!

Mont. Trembler! by whom?—Our Castle's strength will mock
This unadvised attempt. Hang out our banner,
Let it be known the Lion's coop'd within,
And woe to him, who would disturb his slumbers.

Ri. Will you not arm, my Lord?

Mont. Arm me! 'gainst whom?
Match me with nightly pilferers?—measure lances
With men of no account, and desperate ventures?
Our boys shall hunt these midnight prowlers back.

Rom. No prowlers these. The Count Bassano leads
A host of warriors.

Mont. Aye!—is't so?—Bassano?—
Yet who, but prosperous Love, would knock so rudely
Or dare Montalto at his Castle-gates?
Curse on the foolish pity that unmann'd me!
Where is my wife?

Ri. Upon the first alarm,
With all a mother's fears mark'd in her countenance,
I saw her quit the Chapel, hastening
Towards the chamber where her children sleep.

Mont. Sleep! can they sleep at such an hour as this?
When Nature's holiest bonds are burst asunder?
Wake slumbering Innocence! or thou art like
To wake no more.—Beneath a mother's smile
Lurk death and treason—Innocence awake!
The breast that bore thee, yearns for thy destruction!

Rom. Patience, my Lord . . . . . .

Mont. Preach patience to the winds,
I'll none of it.—Wouldst thou appease the storm
That rages here? As soon mightst thou appease
The foaming billow, when th' Almighty hand
Is stretch'd in anger o'er the ruffled deep,
Raising the world of waters to the height
Of th' Empyrean.—Patience!—Let the tongue
Of smooth-faced flattery pour it to the ear
Of woe, that woos the comforter—Hence! hence!
And tell it to the miser's heir, whose sorrow
May taste thy counsels; to the blooming widow,
Who sigh'd for sables, she may listen to thee,
But preach not patience to a grief like mine!—
Where is Durazzo?——

Ri. In Bassano's battle.

Mont. Nay, jest not with my sorrow.

Ri. Good, my Lord;

I would it were but jesting.

Mont. Join'd Bassano,
And ye still faithful ?—'Tis a mockery,
I'll not believe it.—This man was more dear to me,
A thousand fold, than ye—My heart's best blood
Had flowed to do him service—He desert me ?—
Well, well, the world is closing on Montalto !—
Be counsell'd friends, get ye too to Bassano ;
Hang not your fortunes on a sinking cause,
Fly from the outcast Son, the heaven-abandon'd !—

Ant. Be of good cheer ! stout hearts and hands might [save
A cause more desperate.

Mont. Thou art right, old man,
I yet may grapple with outrageous fortune,
And drag mine enemies to ruin with me—
Bring me my armour !—Thou art right, old man !
The clash of arms, the shouts of victory,
The groans and imprecations of the dying
Will be fit music for my sickening soul !—
Hast thou a wife ? Keep a quick eye upon her,
Or thou'llt be played upon, as I have been :
And keep thee from the wars, and thou shallt wear
More than a warrior's crest : but above all,
If she do smile upon thee in her sleep
Let thy quick steel give vent to her heart's blood,
Or thou art surely cozened !

(His armour is brought—he takes up the scarf.)

These were her colours,
Which I have guarded, Heaven knows at what risk !
Lest an unhallow'd touch should sully them.
Mark how they fade, ungrateful as herself,
And mock my care. But thus, I throw them from me,
Thus tear them from my heart !

(Puts on his armour.—Noise of battle continues.
I come, I come.—
Now may the God of Battles steel my heart
To deeds of death! Vengeance, blood-thirsty Deity!
Sit on my sword, 'till even thou art cloyed
With the full sacrifice! Let groans and shrieks,
And supplications be my guides to slaughter!
Thus flush'd with death, may Heaven's unerring hand
Confront me face to face, and foot to foot,
With the accursed author of my misery,
And when all stain'd and reeking with his blood,
I stand exulting in excess of vengeance,
Crumble ye worlds! and close on me for ever!
[*Exit followed by the others.*

(Noise of Battle.)

Enter LAURA.

Never was music sweeter to the ear,
Than this to mine! No dying melody
More grateful to the love-sick maiden's grief
Than is this din to me. Aye! aye! shout! shout!
These are th' auspicious signals of my triumph.
The hand, that raised the storm, fears not its fury,
Tho' all around the forked lightnings play,
And death and desolation mark its progress.
She, the despised, now triumphs in her turn!
The hour of retribution dawns upon me!
The bounds, that fenced my fortunes, are o'erleap'd.
Nearer and nearer rolls the tide of war!
Be true, ye Dæmons, nor defeat my vengeance!
[*Exit.*

MONTALTO *led in wounded followed by* ANTONIO, ROMANO, RIALVO, *Soldiers, &c.*

Mont. So, softly friends!—here let me bleed to death.

Ri. Bear up, my Lord, we must to horse and fly!
Rom. Durazzo's forfeit life has paid his treason,
But all too late. We must away tonight.
Mont. A perilous journey lies indeed before me,
Dark is the way, and long, but 'tis a road
We all must travel. Ere tomorrow's sun
Montalto lives no more.
Ant. Now Heaven forbid!
Are you so sorely wounded?
Mont. E'en to death!
Rom. Be of good cheer! Montalto yet shall live
To wreak a dreadful vengeance on his foes.
Let's onward tow'rds the camp, our time is short,
Within an hour Bassano lords it here.
I'll to the Countess Julia.
Mont. How Romano
The first to greet her with her widow's honors?
Rom. Forbid it Heaven!
Mont. Wait but a few short minutes,
And thou shallt be the happiest messenger,
That ever bore the tidings of good fortune.
A little yet, and thou may'st flatter her
With the recital of my dying pangs,
My latest agony. But bear in mind,
As thou dost value happiness hereafter,
When thou hast cloyed her with the welcome tale
And all her cares seem buried with Montalto,
Then ring into her ear the parting curse
With which a dying husband charged thy hearing!

Julia *rushes in, leading her Child and followed by Soldiers.*

Jul. Hence, bird of evil, hence! Croak out thy tale

To ears more credulous,—I'll not believe it.—
Dead, saidst thou, dead?—Montalto dead?—'Tis false:
He lives! he lives!

[*Rushes to embrace him, he motions her back.*

Mont. Aye, lives . . . . . to curse thee!

Jul. Curse me!—
Merciful God!

Mont. Dying men's deeds are desperate
Th' expiring blow is deadly—out of my sight!—
Lest my last act should be an act of blood—
Tempt not my vengeance thus!—begone, begone!—

Rom. What phrenzy's this?—It is your wife my
The Lady Julia! [Lord.

Jul. 'Tis your wife, Montalto!

Mont. 'Tis said that ravenous beasts have turned aside
Sometimes, affrighted, from the bleeding victim,
By its low moan, and pitiful, sad sobbings!
But thou, more cruel far, do'st come to glut thee
With my last agonies. Here, false one, here!
Gaze on the breast, blood-stained and spiritless,
On which thou has reposed, Heaven knows how oft!
Gaze on these arms all nerveless and unstrung,
Which knew no burthen, but thy smiles could lighten:
And mark these lips, which thine so oft have press'd,
Which never wearied telling how they loved,
Trembling with life's last gasp, yet hung with curses!

Jul. Where am I?—Is not this some horrible dream?
Speak to me!—Rouze me!—I shall madden else,
And think it true, and die believing it—
Oh horror, horror!—Heaven have mercy on me!

Mont. Hence to Bassano!--hence!--There syren-like
Wind round him, steal into his heart—assume
The mastery of his soul's best affections,

Then mock the credulous foot that trusted thee.
Thus shall I be avenged!
Jul. Oh pity him,
Merciful God!—Place not to his account
The ravings of despair—Oh hear him not,
Father of mercies!
Mont. Cease, perfidious, cease!
Thy prayers shall never reach the Throne of Grace.
A husband's curse shall weigh them to the earth,
A husband's curse is register'd in Heaven!—
Jul. Oh mercy! mercy!—No, not even in phrenzy
Could I have curs'd Montalto. The swolen brain
Had riv'd its tenement; th' o'erlabouring heart
Had burst; I had gone mad; or died;
But never, never, had I curs'd Montalto!
Ri. (to the bystanders.)
This is the very height of madness, gentlemen!
Be calm, my Lord! in mercy be more calm!
Jul. (embracing her child)
Oh helpless, orphan'd boy!—poor innocent child—
Now my last hope; my only, only hope,
Hear not thy father lest thou learn to hate him,
Boy, he hath curs'd thy mother!—curs'd that breast,
That hath so loved, so honored him!—
Mont. Bring the child hither!
Come to thy dying father, Boy!—fear not
A curse should light on thee—weep not, poor boy,
Weep not, sweet innocent! Take my last blessing!
'Tis all thy father now has left to give;
But be thou all, he dreamt thy mother was,
And thou'llt be rich indeed!
My sight grows dim—
The world seems fading from my view, and all

That it contains.—She too .... the only one ....
Whose voice, if yet I heard .... once more ... to
justify ....
Julia! .... once more to justify .... Oh Heaven!
[*Dies.*

Jul. (throwing herself on the body)
Montalto! hear me, hear me! Oh he's gone,
He's gone for ever!—curses on his lips,
And hatred in his heart! May Heaven forgive him!
[*She swoons on the body,—attendants carry her to a couch.*

Enter Officer hastily.

Offi. Where is the Count?
Rom. Away!—disturb not now
The house of mourning.
Offi. Fain would I respect
All, who now grace this presence; but time presses.
Where is the Count? All's lost!
Rom. All's lost!
Offi. Even so.
We are Bassano's prisoners.
Rom. This doth indeed compleat our scene of misery!
[*Flourish of trumpets.*

Enter BASSANO, *Officers, Soldiers, &c.*

Bass. What men are these, who still appear in arms,
When all has yielded to us?
Rom. Men, my Lord,
'Till now unskill'd to bend the pliant neck
Beneath the victor's yoke. We are your prisoners.
Bass. Had valour met its recompense, Bassano
Had never boasted of so rich a capture.
Where is your Lord Montalto?

Rom. Far beyond
The reach of envy and the power of fortune.
[*Points to the body.*
This was the Count Montalto!
Bass. Is he fallen,
The pride and boast of modern chivalry?
Rapid and meteor-like thy course was run,
Bright star! but radiant glory mark'd thy progress;
The lesser fires, whose envious lustre paled
Before thy blest effulgence, soon shall dart
Their twinkling beams again, but when shall valour,
Now turn to hail the day-star of its worship?
Throw over him a soldier's mantle!—presently
We'll give our further orders.
What frail form
Is this, whose spirit on existence's verge,
Seems on the eve of flight?—Is it the Countess?
Ant. The Countess Julia!
Bass. Alas! poor Lady,
Bear her away, ere yet she wake to meet
This piteous spectacle! Be it thy care,
Old Soldier, to attend thy Lady's chamber,
To watch lest aught be wanting, aught forgotten,
Which sorrow may require. Those streaming eyes
Betray thy master's kindness, and thy love.
So, bear her to her chamber!—
[*they bear off the Countess.*
Ri. The Lady Laura comes!
Bass. I well had spared
This early meeting, but it needs must come.

Enter Laura.

Laur. Thus ever may propitious fortune crown

Bassano's arms . . . . . .

Bass. Oh welcome, Lady Laura!
Welcome first duly to receive our thanks
For service fairly render'd; then to share
The triumph of our arms; to note the fall
Of those, whom birth, in nature's sore despite,
Placed nearest to thee. This way, gentle Lady,
Here lies Montalto's corse!

Laur. *(turns, shuddering)*
In mercy . . . . . .

Bass. Softly,
Turn not aside. This is thy triumph, Lady!—
Low if he lie, who struck the blow but Laura?
Fled if it be, that ardent, chivalrous spirit,
Which poisoned in that lump of mouldering clay,
Did stir it on to deeds, a God might envy,
Fled if it be, who urged it hence, but Laura?

Laur. How, Traitor! . . . . .

Bass. Nay, I merit not such title;
I never trafficked with the blood of kindred.
To me the bonds of Nature still are sacred.
This was my foe, link'd to me by no tie
Of parentage, or friendship. The same arms
Did never bear us both, nor the same eye
E'er drop parental tears upon our youth;
Yet I could weep in bitterness of soul,
To think mine enemy should thus have fallen.

Laur. Great God, am I deceived?

Bass. Deceived!—Nay, Lady,
A friend, a brother, may deceive, but who
E'er look'd for less amidst an Enemy's ranks?
Here lies the victim of deceit!—Even here,
Where kindred blood might claim a kindlier dealing.

Oh! I had visited with rigorous justice
This traiterous act, or those who compass'd it,
Had not Fate, jealous of the deed, forerun
My purpose, and reclaim'd her victims.

Laur. Victims!
Her victims, saidst thou?—Not her victims?—Speak!
Recall these horrible words!—Durazzo! . . . . .

Bass. Sleeps
On Valour's bed.

Laur. Oh! mock me not, Bassano,
With idle words like these. Spare real grief
Such pitiful mummery!—Plain speech!—plain truth!
Wouldst have me think him dead?

Bass. Aye Lady, dead—
Twice thou willt force the word.—In Valour's wanton-
Durazzo yielded life, as reckless of it. [ness
His brother fell by Count Montalto's sword.

Laur. Through blood and treachery to this? to this,
Ye Dæmons of revenge? Is this the end,
The consummation, that ambition coveted,
Left in the very harvest of my sins
To brood alone upon the glittering spoil,
And curse the hour that nature gave me being!

Bass. Lady for thee, albeit in this dark tragedy
The guiltiest—'midst the sinning, the most sinful—
There is no cause for fear.

Laur. For fear! oh no!
Fear reaches not the pinnacle of wretchedness,
On which I stand. I never can know fear.
Outcast of God and man!—predoom'd, accursed
E'en from my birth; there is for me nor hope,
Nor fear.—One long, long, night of misery
Has been and shall be ever. Lead me hence!
The sleep of death be mine!—the grave my refuge!

Bass. No, Lady, no. Beneath a cloister's shade
And portioned, as becomes Count Xavier's daughter,
Thou shallt lack nought, but liberty. The taunts,
And jibings of the world shall reach thee not,
But frequent prayer, and gentle penance point
To pardon and to Heaven!—lead to her chamber
[*They lead off Laura.*
Take up the body!—every sacred rite,
And holy pomp shall grace the obsequies
Of this great Captain. O'er a soldier's grave
Shall drop a soldier's tear; and brazen monuments
And sculptur'd urns would not so honor him,
As this mute tribute from an enemy's eye.
Bear up the corse!—Sound trumpets and lead on!
[*Exeunt omnes.*

END OF ACT V.

With the Author's best compliments

CONSCIENCE;

OR,

THE BRIDAL NIGHT:

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

JAMES HAYNES, ESQ.

34

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1821.

LONDON:
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TO

JAMES PERRY, ESQ.

PROPRIETOR OF THE MORNING CHRONICLE,

&c. &c. &c.

MY DEAR SIR,

DEDICATIONS are so often used as matters of ceremony, or vehicles of adulation, that I am apprehensive the world may not give me credit for the motive by which I am influenced in dedicating the following Tragedy to my best friend. But, whatever the world may think, I am sure that your own candid mind will do me justice. It is neither on account of your acknowledged talents, nor your undeviating consistency as a public man, (to which some of the greatest characters of the day have borne such honourable testimony,) that I approach you with this humble, yet

sincere tribute of my respect. Those are topics for higher praise than mine; and they call for a more dignified occasion than such a work can furnish. The qualities that fall more properly within the sphere of my notice, are those by which I am bound to you in lasting ties of gratitude; and which have been manifested towards me in so many instances of kindness, urbanity, and friendship, as I never can hope to repay. I promise myself, however, that even the imperfections of this Tragedy, for the introduction of which to the world I am indebted to you alone, will not diminish your satisfaction at receiving, from a member of your own literary establishment, the only acknowledgment which he has it in his power to make.

I am, my dear Sir,

With the strongest sentiments of respect and gratitude,

Your very obedient and faithful Servant,

JAMES HAYNES.

PREFACE.

As my only object in writing a Preface, is to return thanks to the different Performers concerned in the representation of this Tragedy, I shall say nothing of the Tragedy itself. Mrs. WEST's conception of ELMIRA was so perfect, and her feeling so powerful, that I am only prevented from expressing my admiration of her exertions in detail, by the fear that it might seem to insinuate a compliment to the character itself, as I had drawn it. Mr. WALLACK's picture of LORENZO was strongly imagined and vigorously executed; and as in a new piece no support can be derived from the imitation of established models, it furnishes a test by which the original powers of the mind may be tried; for without such powers the performance cannot be rendered effective. Mr. COOPER, though not accustomed to appear in aged characters, kindly undertook that of ARSENIO: but I feel that I am scarcely bound to offer an apology for having been instrumental in exciting him to an effort which proved that he could depart from his line with safety to his reputation. Mr.

Bromley, in Alfero, surpassed my expectations. Alfero is an unfinished sketch,—he gave it the importance of a principal character. The parts assigned to Mr. Foote and Mr. Barnard could do nothing for them, they did every thing for the parts; and all the other gentlemen were as conspicuous in exertion, as their respective opportunities would permit. I should not conclude this notice without introducing the name of Mr. Russell, the Stage Manager, who favoured me with many useful suggestions, and obliged me by a strict attention to the progress of the rehearsals.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DUKE OF VENICE ..... *Mr. Powell.*

ARSENIO ..... *Mr. Cooper.*

LORENZO ..... *Mr. Wallack.*

JULIO ..... *Mr. Barnard.*

RODOLPHO ..... *Mr. Foote.*

ALFERO ..... *Mr. Bromley.*

ELMIRA ..... *Mrs. West.*

Freebooters, Officers, Attendants, &c.

SCENE — Venice and its neighbourhood.

[The lines distinguished by inverted commas are omitted in the representation.]

PROLOGUE,

SPOKEN BY MR. COOPER.

To-night a bard unknown assays his art,
By tragic strains to reach the feeling heart:
His theme domestick, therefore apt to move
The tear that sweet retirement will approve.
Though here in crowds you weep, such tears belong
To finer movements than the poet's song;
To that dear home where fond affections trace
Their brightest hope in every well-known face;
And, when applying our imagined scene,
You feel the more to think—it might have been.
Nor can it less affect you, that we tell
What miseries a wedded pair befell;
And how they fared, e'en to their latest groan,
Part by misfortune—part by guilt undone.
The guilt the husband's; but the virtue fair—
Its proper form—a female form should wear.
Courageous tremblers! In the hour of ill,
Strong love the place of boldness can fulfil,
Advance your souls to act the noblest part,
And, while it wrings, invigorate the heart.

This picture, too, with trembling hand to try,
Our Author takes his chance — nor does he fly
To vain excuses — if he fail to shine,
His pen was mortal, though the theme divine.
One word at parting, in our Author's favour,
That not of pride, or meanness, ought to savour:
He is unknown, and therefore hopes to find
Your temper'd judgment to his feelings kind.
He is unknown — the task belongs to you,
To draw retiring merit into view:
If he has merit, fan the lowly flame;
The breath that kindles shall divide his fame.
If he has none, to prove it you should lend
A candid hearing — hear him to the end.
One flattering hope alone he bade me state,
That as your power throughout the world is great,
Your greatness generous — so with British pride
Your hearts will lean to aid the weaker side;
Nor in the circuit of these walls alone
Refuse to make the stranger's cause your own.

CONSCIENCE;

OR,

THE BRIDAL NIGHT.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Street in Venice.

Enter JULIO *and* RODOLPHO.

Rod. Ah! Signior Julio, 'tis a luckless day
For your unhappy friend.
Jul. My poor Lorenzo!
But still, Rodolpho, consolation springs
From knowing *thou* art friendly to his cause.
Rod. Though long the servant of his enemy,
My mind was free. Arsenio is my master,
But not the master of my thoughts.
Jul. Elmira,
Thy master's daughter, too, hath claimed the right
Inborn of all our race: for shall we see

With our own eyes, nor judge with our own minds?
She loves the object of her father's hate,
More dearly for that hatred.

Rod. But in vain
Her fondness now. The sentence of the court
Hath left Lorenzo at her father's mercy.

Jul. 'Tis true the law this day confirms his title
To all my friend's possessions:—shame pursue
The memory of the wretch whose crimes prepared it.

Rod. You mean *Rinaldo?*

Jul. Yes; Arsenio's brother,
And one of kindred mould.—Thou didst not know
That brother?

Rod. He had died some months before
My ruined fortunes drove me here to Venice.

Jul. They say the dead should rest; but villains rot
Unsanctified. Rinaldo was a villain
Cast like a blemish on humanity:
He was the guardian of Lorenzo's youth:—
The guardian, did I say? He robbed the orphan
By forged bonds, by oaths he conjured up
A fabricated debt against his friend
Deceased; and by enticements led the son
Into the toils of waste and usury.
Thus did he become possessed of all: when, lo!

As from repletion of his avarice,
The villain died.
Rod. Still in Arsenio lives
A claimant to his ill got wealth.
Jul. He has it;
The law has given it him; and the next dawn
That peeps from heaven must find Lorenzo wandering
Far from his home and love. O! were it not
An action worth the honest zeal of virtue
To serve the hapless pair?
Rod. But how to serve them?
Jul. Suppose the power were thine?
Rod. The name of power
Mocks my condition, sir!
Jul. Not so, not so.
Thy master's doors are barred against Lorenzo.—
Rod. You 'd have them opened?—
Jul. Only for a moment,
But while the quick farewell of parting faith
Bursts in a sigh.
Rod. Th' attempt were full of danger.
Jul. But full of virtue,—full of pride, Rodolpho:
It plucks the meanness from the poor man's lot
When he aspires to succour misery.
Rod. Should I betray my master?
Jul. How betray him!

Ask I for aught of his? The tears they shed,
With your allowance, in each other's sight,
Fall not from him, nor to his rights 'pertain:
He has abundance of another kind,
And need not envy them their sorrow's plenty.

Rod. I ought, yet know not to refuse. Then mark me;
Within an hour the eastern gate shall stand
Ajar; Lorenzo may in safety open;
And there the sweetest lips that ever spoke
Must bid him long farewell.

Jul. Thanks, good Rodolpho. [*Exit* RODOLPHO.
And here Lorenzo comes; as yet he knows not
The sentence of the court.

Enter LORENZO.

Jul. How fares my friend?

Lor. That I should ask of thee: What say our judges?
Am I to fare as my good cause demands;
Or is the current of their wisdom set
Against the weak? — Why even the whirlwind blows
With terrors more like justice, when it spreads
An undiscriminating havock round,
Than does the voice of that deliberate knave,
Whose angry tone is kept for the defenceless.
Nay, come confess my ruin.

Jul. 'Tis complete,

Unless Arsenio can be moved to spare thee.
O! I could curse the villain in his grave
Whose arts have led to this.

Lor. Curse not the dead.

Jul. Not curse Rinaldo?

Lor. No.

Jul. 'Tis strange, methinks,
That you should tremble but to hear him named;
And I have noted, that the strong despair
Your losses waked, hath doubled since his death,
As you a friend lamented.

Lor. Talk not thus;
Suspicion's ear might catch the sound.

Jul. Suspicion!

Lor. There are a thousand tapers in the mind,
That burn like flax on the least touch of light,
And leave the socket foul. He was my foe,
I grant you; but he died on my return
From classic travel in the isles of Greece.
Well; he has done with me, and I with him;
And so no more. What may remain of strife,
To be adjusted in our after being,
Where each can challenge either with his wrongs,
Should sleep, as he does, 'till the graves shall open,
And the cold populace of buried nations
Stalk to the general doom.

Jul. If such thy wish,
So let it be: but for thy future course
On what hast thou resolved?
Lor. The Turkish war
Is ended; no destruction offers there;
But inborn foes, a fierce banditti, rage,
And by the state high honours are decreed
To such advent'rous spirits, as shall crush
The desperate band. Our noblest youth in arms
Contest the prize: 't were well to die amongst them.
Jul. I hope some happier turn: and now to think
Of love! I parted from Rodolpho just
As you approached, who to my suit has granted——
Lor. What?
Jul. That the gate, which looks upon the east,
But leads to brighter charms enshrined within,—
I mean the beauty of Arsenio's daughter,—
Shall open soon, nor close 'till thou hast closed it.
Lor. How!—are my stars so kind?
Jul. Within the hour
Thou'lt prove their brightest influence.
Lor. Then come.
Jul. 'Twere yet too soon.
Lor. But from the public way
I would retire; and from the heartless whine
Of seeming friends: there is a cant condolence,

Which gives more pain to the afflicted mind
Than open scorn. I have been so bepitied
By rascals at the moment measuring
Their height above me with an eye as cold
As frost, if frost could feel the cold it scatters—
By heaven! I rather would endure the taunts
Of my worst enemy.—Come, *from* our friends.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

An Apartment in Arsenio's *House.*

Enter Arsenio *and* Elmira.

Elm. But hear me, father.
Ar. Peace! Elmira, peace!
Thou know'st I hate Lorenzo, who in court
Denied my claims. I cast the fool; and now
Thy hand, thy heart, shall follow his possessions,
And in another find a nobler mate.
Elm. Another?
Ar. Yes; the young, the noble *Galza*.
Elm. To love!—am I to love him?
Ar. If you hold
A father's blessing in due reverence.

Elm. Why mix that blessing with so great a curse?

Ar. Why spurn a noble's hand?

Elm. 'Twere perjury
To touch it.—I have sworn:—there 's not a power
That sheds an influence of good, or ill,
On this wide earth, but was my witness then.
O! I have sworn an oath so desperate;
My soul, my precious soul, hath staked the hope
Of its salvation on the constancy
With which it loves Lorenzo! Nay, my father,
Prepare not to reject me; frown not on me;
Remember once you bade me love him too,
And I have loved beyond the dear command.
I disobey you in obedience,
For what you ordered to give, I gave him,
Never to be recalled.

Ar. This to my face!

Elm. The truth cannot offend.

Ar. How! not offend!
I tell thee —— Grant me patience, Heaven! the truth
Thou speak'st of, is device, imposture feigned
To thwart my views: but were it true, nay sworn
In the observable presence of the angel
Of truth herself, it should not weigh with me:—
Denying thee the power to keep thine oath,

I do discharge thee of the obligation.
Thou canst not, that thou shalt not——

Elm. Hear me, sir.

Ar. No more.

Elm. Grant me but one request—to live
In unmolested maidhood, and Lorenzo
Shall never call me his, if thou wilt own me.
Ask I too much for reason, when my heart
Foregoes its natural privilege of choice,
And only craves that others may not claim
The right extinguished thus, but not imparted?
O! think of mercy; think of that, and yield.

Ar. Would'st thou with words unfix my firm resolve?
If in the cavern where the winds reside
You prais'd the light-winged zephyr;—would the winds
Pluck their rough pinions bare; retrench their throats;
Discard their sovereign thunders; and steal out
To fall in love with evening's golden sky,
And play with blossoms in the orange grove?
Neither will I from my prerogative
Descend, at thy entreaty.

Elm. O! my father,
Have patience—think again—resolve to-morrow.

Ar. I leave thee to reflect; thou know'st my will.
If you refuse to wed, as child and parent
We meet no more. [*Exit* Arsenio.

Elm. Ha! meet no more! he said so:—
Then I am lost, abandoned—but my vows,
They shall be kept as pure—lend me, thou great One,
The brave religion of the martyr's heart;
Support my courage to be true to that
Which I have sworn; to him whose virtues first
Advised me of his charms, and led on,
Through admiration, into love.

Enter Rodolpho.

Elm. Rodolpho,
And art thou come to hear my sad complaining?

Rod. To bring relief, dear lady: follow me:
Within the hall Lorenzo waits to soothe
The hour of parting with a fond adieu.

Elm. Alas! the hour of parting! guide me to him.

Rod. This way the private staircase winds; nay, madam,
Take courage; come.

Elm. It is not fear, but agony,
That catches thus my breath.

Rod. Softly—your hand—come, lady.

[*Exeunt:* Rodolpho *leading* Elmira.

SCENE III.

A Hall in Arsenio's *House.*

Enter Lorenzo.

Lor. Once more within these walls: once more expecting
Elmira's presence; not to kindle fires
Of joyous expectation, but to shed
A parting beam. And yet my spirits mount,
As if foreboding better days at hand.
Hark! 'twas the sound of footsteps: there are two:
In one methinks I note the tread of age,
Heavy and slow; the other trips before,
Light and elastic as the air I breathe.
O! sure the music of the spheres that roll
In melody, is that to which she moves.
Ha! she is here.

Enter Elmira.

Lor. Come thou, for ever present,
In soul united, though in person lost:

To fold thee thus again, is to assuage
The wounds of angry fate.
Elm. Would that we now
Could die together; and in parting find
Oblivion of the pain that life prolongs,
'Till happier worlds relieve us. But methinks,
Though still a dearer object to mine eyes,
Thy looks are changed. O! even in change the same:
Such alteration proves thee more my own;
For 'twas the heart, the constant heart, that wrought it.
And must we part?
Lor. 'Tis hard to say we must;
But this unlucky day's result hath left
No choice: the hunt begun, advises me
That creditors in packs would run me down,
Should I remain: therefore to foreign climes,
Though not to new delights, I go, for here
My hopes and wishes perish.
Elm. Yet, one vow
Bear with thee into exile. Though my father
Already for another suitor pleads,
So help me heaven as I am true to thee,
When far away, 'till death strikes at my breast,
And, striking, startles thy loved image there——
Lor. Another suitor! saidst thou so? By heaven

We must not part! Elmira, thee I doubt not:
But force!—off horrid thought!—didst thou not say
That we should die together?

Elm. If the fates
Had fixed to end us here, 'twould be my comfort.

Lor. Then what prevents?

Elm. Lorenzo!

Lor. Nay, forgive me;
I know not what I say. This latest blow
Hath reached my brain. I thought the worst gone by;
But, to be rivalled! robbed of thee! distraction!
Still flight is left us.

Elm. Flight!

Lor. No bolt secures
The gate by which I came. Think how my soul
Must shudder, when, with famine at my side,
I dare invite thee to partake my fortunes.
O! leave me not to madness. Severed from thee,
Should but a rumour tell me thou wert in
Another's arms, I would not trust my life,
Not with those hands, by heaven!

Elm. Rodolpho comes;
Some other time we'll speak.

Lor. He is a man,
And for a man will feel, oppressed as I am.

Enter Rodolpho.

Rod. Signior, the time approaches when my lady
Must with her father to devotion speed,
Invited by the vesper bell. Resolve
At once upon your course.

Lor. Arsenio threatens ——

Rod. I know the piteous wrong he meditates,
And would prevent it. You are free to go,
If such your will; but first this promise give,
That when the holy priest hath made you one,
Elmira shall return to ask forgiveness
Here of her father.

Lor. Promise thee! I bless thee
For the kind thought. Elmira!

Elm. I am thine,
O! judge how wholly thine, when thus consenting.
Expect me soon, Rodolpho, and prepare
My father's heart.

Rod. If he suspect me not,
I know to bend him:—but, to countenance
The well-meant fraud:—suppose I meet you at
The neighbouring convent, when the rites are done,
And bring you home, as by compulsion,
His daughter,—yet a wife.

Lor. My friend! my friend! [*Vesper tolls.*

Rod. Farewell—the vesper tolls—lose not a moment—Fly!

Elm. O my father!

Lor. 'Tis a blessed signal!
Then come, my love!—Now to begin the world!

[*The vesper tolls as the drop scene falls.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE IV.

An Apartment in Arsenio's *Palace.*

Enter Arsenio *and* Rodolpho.

Ar. Returned, and wedded, sayst thou, and entreats
To see me? Why didst bring her back?

Rod. I deemed,
That as thy child, though once in fault,—once only—
Thou still might'st wish—or I can drive her hence,
And bid her not presume.

Ar. There 's no presumption
In coming,—simply coming; for the dog
That finds its way back to its master's door
Will howl there. But to see me, shall it be?
Dares she to ask it? Let her come—admit her
For the last time, then drive her hence for ever.

Rod. Sir, she is here already.

[*Exit* Rodolpho.

Enter Elmira.

Elm. Ha! there he stands! O look upon a wretch,
Who, if she greatly sinned, has greatly suffered!
And let this kneeling posture be my pledge
To heaven and thee—for I have both offended—
How lowly my contrition bows me down.

Ar. Rise, madam; thou couldst spurn my counsel once,
Contemn my weak commands, despise my favour:
It is not meet that one so bold before,
Should now betray such mean humility:—
Nay, rise, thou wert not born to supplicate.

Elm. O speak not strangely thus to one whose brain
Is fired with desperation! rather let
Your anger spurn, than fright me with this coldness:—
Kill me! but know me too.

Ar. Away! what purpose
Can such remembrance serve, that thou shouldst wish
To wake it in my mind?

Elm. Forgiveness.

Ar. Never.

Elm. But for my mother's sake?

Ar. Thy mother's!

Elm. Her's.

Ar. Dar'st thou to hope—

Elm. O let her memory
Fall on me like a beam from mercy's throne,
And show me in my deep affliction!
Remember, when she lived, how oft her lip
Was wont to bless me: let not your revenge
Revoke the blessing thus inherited.
Think, too, how dying in her fond embrace
She strained us both; when, having made her peace
With heaven, she turned a moment to the earth,
And shed the last thought of her heart on you,
And me together.

Ar. Should I think of this?
Why, why didst thou forget it then, and leave me?
Why didst forget thy home?

Elm. I did not, could not:
Nor was it love alone that drove me thence;
Another suitor came to banish me;
And so, half loving—half despairing,
I fell from duty.

Ar. Leave me! let me go!
Thy touch unmans me! Wretched age gives way
To tears—But do I weep?—Support me, heaven!
Bind up those feeble nerves in iron pride,
To stand the shock of melting tenderness:
Snatch back those outstretched arms, that spread abroad

Forgiving, sheltering, if now abandoned
To their own human weakness; fill my mind
With images of disobedience;
With hopes and pleasures of revenge; with power
To seize and wield the fierce prerogative
Of parents, who are dreadful when undone!

Elm. Hear him not, heaven! but to my suit incline;
He prays against the order of all prayer,
Which is for mercy, not against it.

Ar. Hold!
What wouldst thou have?

Elm. What I have lost — thy favour.

Ar. A prouder bearing would become me more,
If I could so deport me; but thy tongue
Hath still the sound of home. May be thy mother,
Though from the grave, comes warm into my heart;
Or thou so like thy mother dost present
Her pleading eyes before me. Which it is
I know not, but I feel thou art my child,
And cannot be to thee as unto others. [*Embraces her.*

Elm. "Thanks to the mighty One!" Thanks to my father!

Ar. Conditions purchase pardon, therefore stay
Thy gratitude, and hear what I demand.

Elm. O! as the act itself is merciful,

So be the mandate that prepares its way:—
Forgive me all.

Ar. When thou hast first consented
To shun the villain, by whose arts misled,
Thy duty failed.

Elm. He wills me not to lose
Thy favour for his sake; do thou the same,
Nor ask me to desert my love for thee.

Ar. I tell thee, if I were expiring here,
My dying heart could not forgive him—No!
Abhorrence, like an instinct, drives me from
That fell antipathy. Let heaven attest
Thy solemn vow never to see his face.

Elm. What! never?

Ar. Not on earth.

Elm. I cannot,—dare not.

Ar. Then was our meeting vain: but know, ungrateful,
The darling object of my care shall be
To part you from each other: hope not, therefore,
To spend your days in happy dalliance:
This arm, though old, may find a nerve to crush him.

Elm. I can but say, farewell.

Ar. Where wouldst thou go?

Elm. No matter where; to famine, bondage, death!

It is my husband calls! Though the whole world
Be deaf to him, 'tis fitting I should hear.
The more they turn away, the more should I
Turn towards him: but I thank thee for this threat,
It gives me strength to leave thee; it supports
The wife against the child, and bears me off
In such a resolute horror, that my soul
Forgets to feel, so busy with despairing.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.

A Street before Arsenio's *Palace. Moonlight.*

Enter Lorenzo *and* Julio.

Jul. She stays so long, I have some hope her suit
May win Arsenio's pardon.

Lor. Should it fail,
What will become of us?

Jul. West of the city,
Within the forest, stands an ancient castle,
Once the proud mansion of my ancestors;
There may you live concealed, till time advise
What better may be done. The news once spread

Of your rich marriage, as the world will call it,
Would be a signal for your creditors
To press: therefore this night you must away.

Lor. O Julio! what an anxious, faithful friend
Misfortune meets in thee! But here is one
Shall thank thee with an angel's voice.—Elmira!

Enter Elmira *from the Palace.*

Lor. Say, what success?

Elm. O let us fly this place!
The pavement is not harder than his heart,
It wounds us not in treading.

Lor. We have still
A refuge left, our friend, and heaven to guide.

Elm. Blessings on both! Julio is pitiful,
And so is heaven; for see the night doth shine,
As if the Spirit of eternal mercy
Had made it for the houseless to rejoice in.
But come, the damps have here a keener cold
Than any where:—a father's curses chill them.

Jul. I will conduct ye to a safe retreat,
Whence tumult and the noisy world shut out,
Leave all to silence and obscurity.

Lor. Lean on me, love, for we have far to go
Before we sleep. O! such a bridal night

Befits not such a bride. Thine is no form
To brave the sickness falling through the sky
From evil planets: but if tenderness
Can pay thee back for comfort, thou shalt ne'er
Regret the time when the cold smile o' the moon,
And the pale foliage of the midnight scene,
Their sympathies afforded; and the bird,
That in the silver hour of solitude,
When Italy sleeps in light, sings to the star
That loves her music, sang to us the while;
And this was all the merry-making passed
To grace the nuptials of a fonder pair
Than ever feasting hailed!—Lean on me, love.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A Cave. A Crowd of Freebooters *discovered.*

1*st Free.* My mind misgives me that our parties fare
But ill: their length of absence, and the fire
With which yon moon, as mimicking the sun,
Surrounds her head, unfriendly to the hope
Of late marauding, promise disappointment.

2*d Free.* Still we have chance, our trusty friend of old,
To sink impediment.

3*d Free.* And skill.

2*d Free.* And courage.
Alfero heads one gang, himself an host;
And he has comrades chosen from the band
For excellence of cruelty. Such men
Have characters to lose, and will rob altars
Rather than come back empty.

1*st Free.* Still I doubt
Some hostile movement of the State against us.
If trade improves not, we must turn to pray,
And feed, like friars, on religion.

2*d Free.* Thou lov'st morality, for morals nurse
The riches of a people, and the sword
Distributes to the brave.

Al. [*without.*] Yield! yield! there's aid at hand.

1*st Free.* Hark! that was Alfero's voice.

[*Swords clashing without.*

Swords clashing too!
Haste we to help; [*advancing;*] but, lo! he comes triumphant;
And in his hand he grasps a woman's arm,
Who looks as she would shriek, but dare not.

Enter Alfero *bearing in* Elmira.

Al. Ho!
Why stand ye thus? one guard the prisoner,
The rest attend me to secure two madmen,
Who rush upon their fate.

Enter Lorenzo, *followed by* Julio, *with their swords drawn.*

Lor. Assassins, off! I'll cut my way amongst
A thousand of ye in a cause like this!
She is my wife; and, while this arm can move,
I'm her protector.

Jul. And, for honour's sake,
I'll die beside him, in a woman's cause.

1*st Free.* Then be it so.

[*Several of the* Freebooters *oppose their swords against* Lorenzo *and* Julio. Lorenzo *disarms one of them; and* Elmira, *breaking from the one who holds her, rushes between* Lorenzo *and the* Freebooters.

Elm. If ye are men, forbear.
Have ye no pride? for shame! they are but two;
A thousand tauntings cannot make them more;
And will ye crowd to kill them? When they spite ye,

'Tis but the bursting of the heart you hear,
And not the challenge of a bold discretion,
That bravery should answer.

1st Free. They must yield,
Or perish.

Lor. If this single arm contained,
With my own blood, the blood of all my race,
And that one blow were fatal to our name
Throughout the generations of mankind,
I'd risk it, ere I'd trust her to your mercy.

[*The* Freebooters *attempt to press on* Lorenzo.

Al. [*Rushing between them.*] A moment hold! confusion of the fray
Deceived mine eyes, or I should know Lorenzo.
Spare him; our interest bids that he should live.

Lor. Whoe'er thou art, that with mysterious mien,
And no less mystery of motive, changest
From hostile strife to human amity;
And stopp'st the steel of murder at our throats;
I thank thee for the boon:—but do I see
Antonio? Heaven forbid!

Al. Yes; the bold outlaw,
Denounced by the Senate in another name,
The dreaded chief Alfero once was called
By such a title, when thou knew'st him better.

Lor. Detested slave! why meet we thus? thine oath,
Thy solemn oath was pledged to fly from Venice;
I gave thee means to fly.

Elm. Lorenzo, rav'st thou?
What treaty couldst thou form with men of blood?
What is't to thee if wretches wait, or wander?
Who nothing know, who nothing ought to know,
Of thee or thine.

Jul. Bestir thee man, arouse;
Shake off this slumberous torpor from thy senses,
That makes affection's self look doubting on thee,
As on a thing of fear.

Lor. Have I said aught?
No matter—'twas a weakness—let it pass.

[*A Bugle sounds without.*

Al. What sound was that? Is it a rescue?—speak!

Enter 4*th* Freebooter.

4*th Free.* Another body of our force, who ventured
Too near the city, are pursued—they come.
Even while I tell thee, thousands hem us round,
Forbid escape, and nothing leave to choose
But death; or worse—surrender!

Al. Say you so?
Still there is hope; let none oppose; let all

Enter an Officer *and* Guards.

Their useless swords resign; themselves submit;
And from the Senate ask to meet their doom.
Lorenzo, 'tis to thee we look for safety.

Lor. To me!

Jul. To him!

Elm. What means this awful being?

Off. How now, in council met? Say thou, the chief,
Resolve ye to submit, or try your weapons
Against superior force?

Al. We yield us to the law.

Off. Secure them straight.

[*The* Guards *surround them.*

Lorenzo—Julio here—and fair Elmira!
In a rough time this greeting comes; yet fear not,
A guard shall e'en conduct you to your home.

Elm. Kind sir, we need it not.

Off. There 's danger yet;
Some stragglers of the band may have escaped.

Elm. Then we will be your debtors for protection.

Off. Kind fortune go with you—On to the Senate,
Even now they sit on busines of the State,
Most grave and pressing: thither guard the prisoners.

Al. Yet one word, ere we go, Lorenzo.

Jul. Still
That villain!

Elm. Hear him not, good officer.
By some accursed spell, some magic thrall,
He would insnare my husband; nay, perchance,
Abuse his honour.

Off. 'Twere a vain attempt:
Lorenzo's honour to the world is known;
And his misfortunes in the multitude
Have moved compassion long; suspicion never——

Al. Yet look to it, Lorenzo—thou hast friends—
Thou art thyself of moment in the city,
Or hast been. In thy wreck of influence
Enough is left to save us—Look to it,
As thou dost value honour; as the sound
Of praise is dear to thee, and shame appalling.
As thou art conscious of the power I hold
To strike thee deeper than the steel could strike,
Look to it; see that timely intercession
Exchange the torture's pang for banishment,
And still be honour's child.

Lor. If aught I strive
To save thee, 'tis not for thy threats, base slave!

Al. Remember——

Lor. Hence! thy sight is pestilence!

[*Exeunt* Alfero *and* Freebooters *guarded.*

[Julio, Lorenzo, *and* Elmira, *regard each other for some time in silent astonishment.*

Jul. What should we think of this?

Lor. Why, any thing;
Witchcraft, or worse: but, as thou art my friend,
And thou my wife—Alas! poor innocent,
Thy sufferings wet my cheek; yet, as thou lov'st me,
Demand to know no more touching this stranger.

Elm. There is a darkness in thy speech, Lorenzo,
Through which the light of reason dimly breaks,
To show what strange and frightful company
Thy thoughts are to each other. Still I am
Thy wife—and, as thy wife, I am obedient.

Lor. O my Elmira! my best love! thou see'st
How fortune and the hand of circumstance,
And stars malignant, and the fiends that walk
As yet in human flesh, conspire against
Thy wretched husband:—judge him not from thence,
For no one should be judged from misery:
Nor, Julio, let thy wonder call me mad,
When on my knees I charge thee save Alfero:
Follow him to the Senate,—save his life:—
Ask me not why—but save it.

Jul. If I could——
But what can I?

Lor. Thy father's memory

Is still revered: — he was a Senator.
Implore the Senate in his name.

Jul. I will;
But this man's crime I fear ——

Lor. Talk not of fears
To me; I have a million in my breast!

Elm. The guard attends — 'tis time we separate.

Jul. I'll try what may be done. [*Exit* Julio.

Lor. Heaven speed thy purpose!

[*Exeunt* Lorenzo *and* Elmira.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The Senate House. The Duke *and* Senators *discovered seated.*

Arsenio *standing.*

Duke. Arsenio, we have summoned thee to-night,
Knowing thy disposition to assist
The commonweal. Our ancient enemy,
As late advices notify, prepares
A numerous army, threatening to the peace
Of this dominion. Thou, the richest burgher
Within our gates, foremost hast ever stood
To help the need o' the time. Some thousand crowns
Our drained exchequer needs in this emergence;
And from thy loyal hand we ask the same,
To be repaid with interest.

Ar. Good, my lords!
That you remember my poor services,

Touches what soothing strings are yet unbroken
About my heart. That you demand, is yours.
I had a daughter once; but she is lost —
Torn by a ruffian from my arms: — I loved her,
I doted; 'twas my fault; but I am punished: —
My country be my heir.

Duke. Not so, good signior;
Thy daughter lives. Anger will soon decay
Where nature once prevailed; and pity, like
A second birth, and dearer than the first,
Give the returning outcast to thy bosom.—
But to our business.

Enter Officer *and* Prisoners.

Off. Let the prisoners pass.
My lords, Alfero and the desperate band,
Infesting long our suburbs, now attend
For judgment. [*Exit one Soldier.*

Enter Alfero, *guarded.*

Duke. Haste, conduct their chief before us.
The sentence of outlawry passed against him
Cuts short all form of trial; therefore, bending
To the stern law, he must prepare to die.

Enter an Attendant.

Attend. Julio, in anxious haste, demands admittance
To this grave presence.

Duke. At this hour of night,
And pressed by weighty cares, let none approach us.
Such, tell him, are thy orders. [*Exit Attendant.*

Al. [*Aside.*] Then 'tis plain
I must resolve on other means of safety;
And there are better here: — but now to use them.
[*To the Senate.*] As we are thus denied all course of law,
All privilege of counsel, or of speech,
Touching the crime for which you do pronounce
That we must suffer: still, if justice be
An act substantial, not a name, in Venice,
I have the means to alter your decree.
Know, then, I bear a secret in my soul
Of more importance to the ends of justice,
Than were the death of twenty routed slaves,
Whose strength to injure is for ever gone.
Nay, it is here; the import touches all,
For it affects domestic confidence,
The home of every man; (and who so poor
To have no home?) yet most the rich it aims at.
But torture cannot find it. Grant us life,

E'en curs'd with slavery, and you shall know
What Venice little dreams.

Duke. Away with him!
He would abuse our fancies, to escape.

Al. Give me but leave to tell Arsenio that,
My silence long hath treasured. If he say not
The knowledge more imports you than our groans,
Why, take the better bargain.

Ar. Pray you, lords,
To grant his suit. I will report him truly.

Duke. At your solicitation we consent.
Conduct him therefore to the private chamber:
But soon return; for we shall wait thy counsel,
Whether to lend an ear to his complaint,
Or take the forfeit his offences owe us.

[*Exeunt* Arsenio *and* Alfero.

SCENE II.

A Chamber in the Senate House.

Enter Arsenio *and* Alfero.

Ar. Why hast thou singled me to hear the tale
That falsehood conjures to arrest thy doom?

How can it appertain to my concern
What *thou* hast known in Venice?

Al. Were it false,
It would import thee nothing. Being true,
It may supply the cravings of revenge;
And be of dear advantage, inasmuch
As thou wouldst crush Lorenzo.

Ar. Is 't of *him*
Thou'dst speak? If bad, go on. If good, expire
In silence. Put *him* in my power — and let
The Duke outbid his coronet in naming
A ransom for thy life, it shall be paid.

Al. Judge from the opening if the close be worth
A patient ear: — Thy brother died of poison.

Ar. Proceed. — The very horror thou strik'st through me,
Flashes a frightful hope.

Al. Lorenzo dated
His ruin from Rinaldo's guardianship,
And to a fatal reckoning call'd his foe. —
To ease thy strong impatience, — I beheld, —
These eyes beheld him mix the deadly drug,
Which, to the seat of being, bore a summons
Strict as the call of fate.

Ar. My brother's death

To be revenged, my daughter's loss requited!
My wrongs repaired, and all upon Lorenzo!
And ample means at hand to perfect all!
Establish this, and thou art free as air
From bonds and accusation.

Al. Put me to
The proof: arraign him: nay, to give our charge
A higher import with the assembled court,
E'en swell the action to a public crime,
Aver that every Senator was doomed
To the same death. Their judgment passed against him
Will give it countenance: and thus shall I,
Secure of pardon, smile — and thou secure
Of vengeance.

Ar. That my child should be his wife! —
O wretched woman! — Yet, I am a father.

Al. Thou wouldst not pardon?

Ar. I would save my child.
I tremble for her. In a murderer's arms
She sleeps. O! let me wake her to her danger.

Al. Thy tears unfit thee.

Ar. Thou mistak'st their meaning.
Compassion for Elmira blends indeed
Some gentle drops; but vengeance weeps the rest.

Al. Back to the Senate, then.

Ar. Hold! There are reasons
To check our haste. Great need is there of proof
Confirming thine, to make his guilt appear.
Not that I doubt his guilt: for he who made
My soul abhor him, grants me now to see
The reason why. But the regard of law
Lends a slow diligence to the approver,
Whom large reward invites. Thus, warn'd of rashness,
Be our approaches grave. The steady march
Is that which suits the hot engagement;
To spend no breath, nor waste a single blow,
'Till death is present with the enemy.

Al. Advise me of the means thy caution notes,
To make our purpose surer of its aim.

Ar. I'll tell thee all. First, for *thy* safety, fear not.
My purse is open to the State; and he
Who grants a favour has a right to claim.
Touching the evidence, my plan proceeds
To tell the Senate (not at full explaining
The substance of the charge) what heavy matter
Thy tongue hath laid before me. To explore
The truth, and weigh the value of such matter,
I will solicit leave that you attend me,
A guard accompanying, to what place
Lorenzo now inhabits.

Al. This is well:
And of his refuge we can learn betimes
From those who gave him escort. But proceed —

Ar. Once in the murderer's presence, need I say
How, like the thunder bursting on the night,
My voice shall reach his soul? Thee will I summon,
As we shall best consider by the way,
To strike his falsehood mute. Then, for the proofs
That nature lends in aid of circumstance;
" The dark surprise, which, while it wonders, speaks
" Confusion, not disdain — the fixed eye —
" The colour of the cheek — the death-like pause —
" Or guilt's unconscious accent crying out —
" May, like a fiend disturbed, confess itself,
" And damn its habitation." Those observing,
I hope to find such strong presumptive aid,
As to the Senate will confirm thy story,
If prudence bid proceed.

Al. Then 'tis in doubt
Whether you do persist to punish him?

Ar. My daughter calls him husband. If he choose
To part from her and Italy to-night,
Her will I spare the shame; to Heaven committing
The anxious charge, to follow him in storms,
And greet his search for quiet — with despair.

Al. Advance we now to meet him, leave obtaining;
And see thou mark him close.

Ar. Mark him! Ay, trust me;
Keen as the tiger winds his prey, when famine
Exasperates his instinct.—I am with thee. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

An Apartment in Julio's *Castle, representing on one Side a large Window in the Venetian Fashion, reaching to the Ground, and opening like folding Doors.*

Lorenzo *discovered.*

Lor. If Julio fail, 'tis but to die, and so
Escape the worst. Would he were come!

Enter Elmira.

Elm. Lorenzo!

Lor. How now, my love?

Elm. Why art thou wandering thus,
Through the vast avenues and lonely halls
Of this drear mansion? As I followed thee
I heard thee talk of death.

Lor. Yes; I was thinking

That all must die; kings, princes must obey
The freezing call. Statesmen must one day stoop
To pay their court to the despotic tomb:
Lawyers must there refund the fee of life:
Heroes, unarmed, forgetting sieges, battles,
Must, far from glory, and the sound of praise,
Take their last station: inspired orators
Must shun the multitude, whose mind they made,
And cleave to silence and oblivion:
The player must desert his mimic scene,
To die indeed: and poets, fond of hope,
With their fine sense of life, must humble too;
And, at the summons, quit Castalia's spring,
To plunge amid the gloom of Erebus.
'Tis to the wretch alone that he denies
The solace of his sleep.

Elm. Thy speech affrights me.
Thou wouldst not rashly dare—thou wouldst not venture
On the wide countries of the unknown life —

Lor. Fear not, my love,—but look where Julio comes.
Leave us—to rest retire—I soon will follow.

[*Exit* Elmira.

Enter Julio.

Lor. Now, Julio, say what news?

Jul. As yet, there 's none;
I was refused admittance to the Senate.

Lor. Then all is lost.

Jul. Not so; for, in my stead,
A friend of greater note has undertaken
To supplicate their mercy for Alfero.

Lor. Yet one thing goads my mind. The time is come
When guilt can hide no more. The only secret
I ever kept from thee must now unfold
Its cloak to thy discerning. But an oath—
An oath must seal it in thy conscious breast,
Thence to be never torn.

Jul. I swear —

Lor. By what?

Jul. By that hereafter hope, which is the source
Of constancy and virtue.

Lor. Nay, though torture
Should labour at thy joints, to drive it out
In drops of blood, let not confession mingle.
Nay, still, though I, thy friend, were on the rack,
And that one word would rescue me from pangs
Which live upon the body's substance long,
To the surprise and grief of nature, spurn,

Renounce the heaven above us, if that word
Should 'scape thy lips; "wrung by a perjur'd mercy
From an incapable soul."—Dost hesitate?

Jul. 'Tis dreadful!—but I swear, abjuring heaven,
And claiming hell my portion, if I speak,
Even to preserve my friend.

Lor. Then know, the wretch
Whose life I'd have thee save, was once my vassal.
I thought not then his former trade was rapine,
But chose him for his zeal. I brought him here—
Rinaldo seized my rights.—Arsenio's malice
Refused Elmira to my arms.—Despair
Imparted rage; and rage let in distraction.
One fatal day this same Alfero proffered
To do me justice; to restore my wealth;
To bless me with the wife my heart had fixed on;
And—shall I speak it out—to poison him
Who trod those prospects down! By the great Power,
Inhabitant of yon blue monarchy,
I know not what I said. But, for some words
In madness uttered, I am branded with
The crime of murder!—
Start not!—thou need 'st not fear me.

Jul. O Lorenzo,
I pity thee,—not fear.

Lor. Look! those are tears;

For gratitude can melt 'em, though despair
Hath froze them up from sorrow. I had thoughts
Of dying,—but thy pity bids me live!

Jul. Yes, live, and still be happy.

Lor. Never, Julio;
Never again: even at my bridal hour
Thou saw 'st detection, like a witch, look on
And smile, and mock at the solemnity,
Conjuring the stars. "Hark! was not that a noise?"

Jul. "No; all is still.

Lor. "Have none approached us?

Jul. "None.

Lor. "Then 'twas my fancy. Every passing hour
"Is crowded with a thousand whisperers;
"The night hath lost its silence, and the stars
"Shoot fire upon my soul. Darkness itself
"Has objects for mine eyes to gaze upon,
"And sends me terror when I pray for sleep
"In vain upon my knees. Nor ends it here;
"My greatest dread of all—detection—casts
"Her shadow on my walk, and startles me
"At every turn: sometimes will reason drag
"Her frightful chain of probable alarms
"Across my mind; or, if fatigued, she droop,
"Her pangs survive the while; as you have seen

" The ocean tossing when the wind is down,
" And the huge storm is dying on the waters."
Once, too, I had a dream——

Jul. The shadows of our sleep should fly with sleep;
Nor hang their sickness on the memory.

Lor. Methought the dead man, rising from his tomb,
Frowned over me. Elmira, at my side,
Stretched her fond arms to shield me from his wrath,
At which, he frowned the more. I turn'd away,
Disgusted, from the spectre, and assayed
To clasp my wife; but she was pale, and cold,
And in her breast the heart was motionless,
And on her limbs the clothing of the grave,
With here and there a worm, hung heavily.
Then did the spectre laugh, till from its mouth
Blood dropp'd upon us, while it cried—'BEHOLD!
SUCH IS THE BRIDAL BED THAT WAITS THY LOVE!'—
I would have struck it, (for my rage was up):
I tried the blow; but, all my senses shaken
By the convulsion, broke the tranced spell,
And darkness told me—sleep was my tormentor.

Jul. And thou would'st have this vision prophesy
To thy delivered senses. Banish it—
Believe what is. E'en should the worst befall,
There lies a dungeon at this castle's foot

Known but to me. It was, in early time,
A refuge from the violence of war,
When savage battle spared not. In its bosom
Thou may'st elude the strictest search.

Lor. Alas!
If life were all my care, to find that dungeon
Had been a transport: but my honor, Julio! —
My dread of shame!

Jul. Still is it some relief
To shun the public trial, whose result
Would more thy reputation mar than hints
Of weak surmise, though absence gave a scope
To its worst virulence.

Lor. True, true, my friend!
There are degrees in baseness. Show this dungeon —
Misery may come any where, but scorn
Can be avoided; and the darkest cell
That shuts it out is as a throne to me,
Whose glory shines in the contempt it conquers.

Jul. Observe this secret spring.

[*He touches a spring, upon which a door in the back scene flies open.*

The door now open,
By steps of solid rock, leads down to darkness.
Another portal there defends the womb

Of the deep cavern; and to silence gives
Security, by distance almost infinite.
It is not in the hollow lungs of famine
To send a shriek so high.

Lor. Replace the spring,
A foot approaches. [Julio *replaces the door.*

Enter a Servant.

Ser. To Lorenzo's hand,
This letter from Arsenio. He attends.

Lor. What can it mean? How! in so mild a tone.
[*Reads.*] "Arsenio would bespeak Lorenzo's ear,
To offer terms." What terms? and with what view?
Admit Arsenio. [*Exit* Servant.
Thou, my friend, retire;
Yet stop within my call. Away—he comes.
[*Exit* Julio.

Enter Arsenio.

Lor. I strive in vain to read within thine eye
The aspect of a kind intelligence.
If from this paper I have rightly gleaned
The meaning, couch'd in phrase, a gentler look
Would more become our meeting.

Ar. I am come
To serve thee, not befriend; the good I offer

Must breathe from lips that have not ceased to curse;
Therefore I keep the aspect that befits
My feeling, though my purpose be more kind.

Lor. Away then courtesy!—Speak as thou wilt,
I'll answer as I ought.

Ar. Resolve me first;
Can riches bribe thee to forego the right
By which thou hold'st my daughter?

Lor. Kingdoms could not.

Ar. Can fear?

Lor. I have no fears but when I look
Upon her face and think of separation.

Ar. Is death unable to subdue the power
With which you grasp her close?

Lor. If death command
This glorious light, the mind, to soar aloft,
And seek its kindred essence, I must stoop
To lay the mortal relic at his feet,
In attitude of meek obedience.
But if you put the choice to die possessing,
Or live renouncing what my soul adores,
Then give me death: for 'tis unutterable
How desolate were life, by her abandoned!

Ar. But what if death, embittered by disgrace,
Should threaten?

Lor. Ha! speak! tell me! what disgrace?

Ar. No matter.

Lor. But it is—and matter, sir,
For strife to moot.

Ar. You understand me, then?
I come to claim my child.

Lor. I claim my wife.
Who shall resist that claim?

Ar. A father.

Lor. Hence!
While yet thou may'st escape.

Ar. Restore her.

Lor. Never!

Ar. Art thou determined?

Lor. Fixed—resolved—immoveable.—
The oak is not more rooted when he lifts
His everlasting arms, and vaunts aloud
To the high storm.

Ar. Then be thy guilt proclaimed;
I'll have thee known through Venice for a murderer!

Lor. Ha!

Ar. Dragged, like any felon, to the place
Of execution; there to satisfy
My brother's ghost!

Lor. Has the sun dropped from heaven?
Or is it in the force of misery

To change the lightsome colour of the day
To this dark aspect? Villain! in thy face
I look at hell, and am already damned!

Ar. Farewell, until we meet in judgment.

Lor. Hold!
I kneel before thee. In the name of truth,
Urge not a charge, the breath of which destroys,
Even though I prove it false. Remember, too,
I'm of thy family; thou canst not fling
Disgrace on me, without thyself partaking.—
Thy child will not survive it, if I die;
Or be degraded by a murderer's name.—
I will not live suspected.

Ar. Perish then,
And trouble me no more. Yet, once again,
Wilt thou restore Elmira?

Lor. Any thing—
Any but that.

Ar. Enough, I now am answered.
O! if my words alone can shake thee thus,
What will this presence!

Enter Alfero.

Lor. [*To* Alfero.] Monster! perjurer!
Ha! knows the Senate all?—say so, and kill me.

Al. As yet they are in ignorance.

Lor. Thank heaven,
Thank heaven for that!

Al. Nay, hope not to escape,
For even now a guard is at the gate.

Lor. Still I can die. [*Draws his sword.*

Ar. Call for assistance. [*To* Alfero.

Lor. Hold!
That call shall be thy last; death, death shall answer!

Ar. Would'st add another murder to the one
Wherewith thy soul is stained already?

Lor. So!
And is't for thee to preach? I hold my fame
So precious, that those eyes by which I drink
The light of heaven,
And make all glorious nature tributary
To my enjoyment, are as worthless balls
Compared with it. And thou to preach!—My life;
Mark you, my life! This fine capacity
Of motion, sense, and thought, opposed against it,
Is as a cup of water, which I spill
Upon the earth in very wantonness.
And shall I leave this idol of my soul
For thee to prostrate? Is there not an echo
In thine own breast, to sound the fierce denial
That bursts from mine?—What's to be done—I have it.

Al. Beware, Lorenzo.

Lor. I would save us all.
There is a secret passage, leading hence,
Through subterraneous windings, to a dell
Within the wood, and thence to the free air;
Thither will I conduct you. Leaving thus
The guard behind us, we shall profit by
The time we gain, to fix upon some course
Of reconcilement.

Ar. No; we dare not trust thee.

Lor. Old and unarmed, ye cannot face a man
So strong in desperation.

Enter Julio.

Lor. Julio, too,
My constant friend, is at my side already.
Here lies the way.

[Julio *touches the spring, and the secret door flies open.*
Your choice is—die, or enter.

Al. The guards once passed, my own escape were certain.
Lorenzo, I consent.

Ar. Deserted thus,
No choice is left to me. Thou hast prevailed
By treachery. Yet, Julio is not base;
I will confide in him if he attend us.

Denouncing to the last that bloody hand
Of thine, which, mark me, vengeance will surprise;
Heaven has an interest in its overthrow.

Jul. [*To* Arsenio.] I will attend.

Lor. Put up thy foolish fears.
Advance — we follow — haste — I listen for
The soldiers' tread — All's safe and silent — On.

[Alfero *and* Arsenio *exeunt through the secret door,* Julio *and* Lorenzo *following.*

END OF ACT THE THIRD.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Scene continued.

Enter LORENZO *and* JULIO *from the private door.*

Lor. Hush! all is still! come forth, and let me bless thee,
For this, and every good.
Jul. We lost them soon
In the dark windings of the vault. Now bars
Of massy bulk divide them from the steps
By which they did descend. — But how explain
Their absence?
Lor. That I know not yet. But here,
Beyond this lattice, to the river's edge,
A parapet outstretches; and, below,
Close to the castle's side, a boat is moor'd;
Descend, and cut the rope, while I remain
Alone to meet the guard.

Jul. What, leave thee thus?
I have already ventured more for friendship
Than risk of life. Think 'st thou that risk could warn me?
Lor. 'Tis better for us both. What I shall do
Must be by stratagem. "Thou 'lt serve me more
"By 'scaping hence, to 'scape suspicion also,
"And thus be free to aid me still. Return
"Anon,—for I shall need thy counsel much."
The shortest absence will suffice to clear
Thy conduct of concernment in this business.
Jul. Agreed. Yet, O remember, those who breathe
In darkness, still are men!
Lor. Fear not: "This hand
"Shall feed them there; even as the ravens fed
"The prophet in the wild: fear not for them."
[*Exit* Julio *through the folding door.*
Lor. What 's to be done? What if I say Alfero
Against Arsenio charged some heavy crime;
And that, by mutual and concerted act,
They hither came to shun the penalty
Of angry law? Even as my friend has gone,
Will I of them report.—The Senate knows not.—
And have I sunk to this bad game at last,
To stake the blessed truth 'gainst wretched safety;
And, for the certain loss, have but my chance

Of reputation covered by a lie?
O guilt! is this thine aid?—are these thy means?
But to be called a murderer! to die
A shameful death! or, ('scaping death) to live
A terror! a reproach! Where do I wander?
The fastnesses of falsehood must protect,
When truth is full of menace. Ha! they come.

Enter an Officer *and* Soldiers.

Off. Signior, the hour demands that we return
Our prisoner to his judges.

Lor. Whom? what would you?

Off. On short reprieve Alfero holds his life,
And must not longer stay.

Lor. Find, and conduct him.

Off. 'Tis vain to trifle thus: the gate we guarded:
No soul hath left or entered in the time
Of our strict watch.

Lor. You guarded well the gates—
But did you march your troops upon the water?
Look how the waves are riding to the sea,
As if they crowded to behold the pomp
Of ocean, where he meets the foremost tide,
And thunders welcome to the fugitives.

Off. Ha! gone, escaped!

Lor. Beyond pursuit for ever!
The tempest hath not such a wing as fear;
An eagle's valorous speed is toughly strained
To chase the smallest bird; and the thin worm
Will pierce and wound the earth, as with a sword,
To cut its way, if but a touch provoke
The feats that fright can do.
Off. But is Arsenio
Gone with the other?
Lor. He had greater cause.
" Alfero's life was forfeit,—but his heart
" Had set no store on that which higher natures
" Prize, to the scorn of life and limb—their honour."
Arsenio's honour in that wretch's power
Might well have made him desperate,—he was so.
" No chance remained; for, whether true or false,
" The tooth of accusation wounds and mangles
" The sensitive vein of pride."
Off. But I would know
If he is gone?
Lor. He is,—what could he do?
Alfero threatened to denounce him strait
To all mankind, if he should fail to move
The Senate in his favour. That he could not;—

There was but one resource, on which resolving,
The river was not far, nor the wind adverse.

Off. "You speak this matter well to my plain ear;
"But to allow their flight was criminal."

Lor. "There I confess my weakness. To the State
"I owed the duty of a subject, bound
"To aid her laws, and see her justice rendered;
"But something, too, I owed to nature's pleading;
"For, though he wronged me, we were still allied;
"He called me—son—the name itself was tender;
"Despair had put it in his mouth: he kneeled:
"Elmira's image ruling in my heart,
"Snatched him within its sanctuary; held him
"Even in the seat that mercy calls her own;
"Exposed his wrinkled brow, his hoary head,
"Where every silver hair complained of time,
"Counted the tears that in a scalding shower
"Dropt their large sorrow on his breast; said all
"A child can say, who pleads a father's cause,
"And gained in all that love is sure to gain,
"Though justice thundered from the capitol."

Off. This you must answer to the Duke himself;
My duty bids that I conduct you to him.

Lor. Even as you will,—I mean to answer it.

Enter Elmira.

Elm. Lorenzo, stay! Are all mankind in league
To tear my husband from me?

Lor. [*Aside.*] This is what
I would have shunned the most.

Elm. How is it thus,
That in the deep and peaceful hour of night
The servants of the State should swarm our dwelling?
What is the cause?

Off. Resistance to the law:
He doth refuse a prisoner to our call,
By justice doomed to die. Moreover, lady,
He hath disposed of one thou 'lt much lament—
Thy father:—how and wherefore, to the Senate
He must account, to the which end we seize him.

Elm. Heard I aright? was it my father's name?

Lor. Good sir, withdraw the guard. My honour pledged
Will give you just assurance that I bear
No wish to 'scape.

Elm. One moment to a wife.

Off. It must be short, for time advises speed.
Take thou [*to one of the* Guard] the fleetest courser, and acquaint

The Senate what has happened. Say we follow.
Guard thou the parapet by which Alfero
Escaped our watch. Another guard the portal,
Whose opening gave us entrance; while the rest,
With strict attention, search the castle through,
In quest of those intrusted to our care.

[Officer *and* Guards *retire at different Passages.*

Lor. Accept my best of thanks.—And now, Elmira,
Dispel the doubts and fears, which on thy brow
Hold troubled counsel. For thy father's safety
Thou canst not tremble, love!

Elm. Where is my father?

Lor. Secure from harm.

Elm. But where?

Lor. High heaven hath willed,
Among my other woes, this sharp affliction.
For reasons, which I dare not yet proclaim,
Thy father must be private. Look not on me
With such a piercing sorrow; for be sure
Your separation shall not longer last
Than my great need requires.

Elm. Thy need requires!
Mine asks that he be here.

Lor. Alas! thou know'st not,

Refusing to resign, at his command,
Thy love for ever, falsely did he charge me
With such a crime, that to be charged alone
Were irretrievable disgrace, too strong
For pardon to remove, or innocence
To combat.

Elm. And could'st thou, to shun that charge,
Profane his reverend locks?

Lor. No, as I hope
For mercy! In thine arms he were not less
A prey to outrage. Come, then, smile once more,
And let me see thy confidence revive,
In cheeks that blush to have suspected me.

Elm. Yes, when he comes to bid me smile —

Lor. And brand
Thy husband, in thy hearing, and before
The credulous and evil-judging world,
With a foul crime!

Elm. What crime?

Lor. I dare not whisper
The shame! the shame! If he had held his sword
To my bare breast, not all my wrongs, my ravings,
Not nature struggling in her favourite cause
Of life, could urge me to endanger his;
So dear I knew you prized it. But attempting

To drive me from the seat of good men's minds, —
To chain my reputation to the ground, —
There to be trod upon. — Say, was I not
To make resistance? I have done no more.
The veriest slave that crawls had done as much,
Or lost his title to humanity
" By the neglect." Then how have I offended?

Elm. I can preserve thee otherwise. Conduct me
To find him, — he shall swear eternal silence.

Lor. Th' attempt were vain.

Elm. Prove, e'er you thus pronounce it.

Lor. I kneeled to him — he spurned me!

Elm. What of that?
A kneeling foe is not a kneeling child.

Lor. Urge me no more; it cannot be.

Elm. It must,
If I am worth possessing. O, Lorenzo!
I have not yet forgot that dreadful scene,
The robbers' haunt; nor him who knew thee there.
What such associates may persuade, is more
Than I can tell; but to suspect is phrensy!

Lor. Elmira, hear; by heaven you do me wrong!

Elm. Prove it. Let me but see him; not to speak,
But satisfy mine eyes.

Lor. Will not my oath ——

Elm. What are your oaths to me? If you have dipped
Your hands in blood of mine, will oaths console me?
Will they undo the deed? Pierce the firm earth,
That makes oblivion lasting? Raise the fallen?
Close up the wound through which the spirit fled?
Recall that spirit to its shatter'd home,
And, in the empty vessels of the heart,
Revive the pulse, and make it beat again,
Because you swore 'twas beating?

Lor. Is it thus
Thy love is shown at last?

Elm. Oh! I have shown it,
Even by the loss of all, without complaining;
Nor do I now complain. Keep back the prospect
Of wealth and splendour: nay, the holy sound
That pours parental blessings down keep back;
For freely I resigned them: but my father!
Give me my father!

Lor. 'Tis impossible!

Elm. My heart has stopt to hear thee speak again.

Lor. I cannot.

Elm. But a word: say I shall see him!

Lor. Another time.

Elm. 'Till then, I know thee not.

Lor. For mercy's sake, Elmira! wilt thou join

The cruel world, and take its part against me?
Yet pause ——

Elm. The voice of Heaven cries out, Persist!
Heaven, I obey. [*Exit* Elmira.

Lor. Alone, and yet alive! [*Enter* Guards.
My dream is coming true. Now, sirs, I'm ready.
[*To the* Guards.
There is no trial after this but one;
The worst of human penalty is over.
[*Exit* Lorenzo, *guarded.*

SCENE II.

Another Apartment in the Castle.

Enter Julio *and* Rodolpho.

Jul. Well met in evil time, my good Rodolpho!

Rod. Was that Lorenzo whom they bore away?

Jul. The same.

Rod. Alas! I fear hard fortune waits him.

Jul. Hast thou heard aught? O yes; thy presence here
At such an hour, forebodes some sad event,
Or known, or dreaded by thee.

Rod. I am come
To tell of strange proceeding in the Senate.
They sat, and were in council deep engaged,
When, by a breathless messenger despatched
From hence, they learned Alfero's late escape;
And, by the same advice, my master's absence.

Jul. Bring'st thou their comments?

Rod. I was summon'd forth,
And questioned; but, my ignorance made known,
Was soon dismissed. Yet, not before I heard
Their friendship for Arsenio, ofttimes vowed,
And their suspicions added, that Lorenzo
Was treacherous; having, by death, or bondage,
Suppressed the evidence of some dark crime
Against him threatened.

Jul. And are those our judges,
Who fling the trash their own suspicions breed,
Into the scale they hold?

Rod. What most amazed me,
The Duke apprised them of a plan to reach
The truth in its concealment. Then he paused,
And said: — 'Twas harsh and cruel, but the end
Would justify the means!

Jul. What could he purpose?

Rod. Some fatal scheme.

Jul. 'Tis like he meditates
To try the torture. O, my hapless friend!
How will his shatter'd nerves endure the search
Of the inquisitive anguish? But, behold,
Elmira comes! What mischief grief has done
In that pale cheek! cropping the healthful rose;
Yet with a hand so tender, that the bed
Of beauty, where it grew, is scarce impaired
By absence of its bloom. How now, sweet lady!

Enter Elmira.

Elm. When we would speak the names that most delight,
Are they not — husband! father! Is it so
With me? Can I on either dwell, and say,
This gives me comfort? No; my grief, my horror,
Associate with the very words that breathe
A balm on other hearts.

Jul. She heeds us not.

Elm. And is he dead, or dying? and do I
Deliberate to call th' offended law
Down on his murderer! Who murdered him?
'Tis madness but to think! — Come, let me wake
The holy vengeance that was stamped on Cain,
To mark him too. — I should revenge my father!

On whom should I revenge him? On my husband!
What, then, must I become? A widow! made
By my own hand. Am I to have no mercy?
Teach me, thou dreadful Power, whose name is justice,
If it be so: then kill me, and be satisfied.

Jul. I dare not reason with a grief like thine:
Yet, know the Duke is fixed to find thy father,
If on the earth alive.

Elm. Eternal blessings
Reward his gracious effort.

Rod. To that end
Detection toils, and justice lifts her arm. ——

Elm. But where to strike? Curst! withered be the arm
Which falls in anger on my husband's head!
O this perplexing state! What shall I do?
Whom shall I bless? Whom curse? I have no right
To curse or bless; to do like other beings,
Who in their very wishes have a power
Denied to me. If I invite a wish
On either side, it looks so frightful at me,
The stirring of my mind is terrible.—
But who is this?

Enter a Messenger *of the Senate.*

Jul. Your business?

Mess. From the Senate.

Elm. Speak to him, ask what I can only hear?

Mess. My mission, lady, from the Duke proceeds,
Who, sitting now in council, doth command
Thy presence there.

Elm. What would he have with me?
That I am wretched, for our common loss,
He needs not to be told, who knows my share in't.
But I have no complaint; my grief is mute,
And asks not human aid to bring it comfort.

Mess. Yet, though you make no charge, 'tis fit you come
To clear yourself.

Elm. Of what?

Mess. Suspicion lights
Upon your head, that you have done the deed.

Elm. What deed?

Mess. Conspired against Arsenio's life.

Elm. Fool! was he not my father?

Mess. There have been
Hands dipped ere now in parricide.

Elm. O Julio!
Hear this! Lorenzo, where art thou, to cleave
This ruffian's tongue to the root! Ye mighty gods,
What are your thunders fit for, if they sleep
While injury prevails beneath their sway!
Is it to rouse the lion from his dream,
Or in the bosom of the waters scare
The finny race, that you disturb all heaven,
While sinners laugh securely as they hear
The muttering impotence, which shakes the earth,
But does not execution on its villanies.

Jul. Be patient, madam, what has innocence
Like thine to fear?

Elm. Every thing! every thing,
In such a world!

Jul. Tis vain, we must submit
To the Duke's mandate. Thou, Rodolpho, go
Attend thy mistress to the Senate House,
While to Lorenzo's ear I bear the news
Of this determined outrage.

Elm. Bear to him
My love—my blessing—it may be the last.

Jul. He who defends the good, is on thy side;
For though to be insulted is the lot
Misfortune draws on earth, there is a shield

To guard the character of innocence
" From worse dishonour: wherefore be assured
" There is no strength in justice, but to save thee."

Elm. Whate'er *my* lot, that shield be on Lorenzo.
Oh! may he prove both innocent and happy!

[*Exeunt severally:* Elmira *guarded.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A Dungeon.

Lorenzo *discovered in chains.*

Lor. Chains! and a dungeon! and despair within!
But is there not in penitence —— Away!
Repentance will not come without disgrace;
And with disgrace it shall not. To be firm,
In silence and in suffering, is my task.
How now?

Enter Jailor.

Jail. An anxious messenger attends,
By our great Duke's command.
Lor. Bid him approach. [*Exit* Jailor.
" He brings my fate with him. I wrote at length,
" In furtherance of what I said before,
" Touching the absence of my enemies,
" And why they fled."

Enter Messenger.

Lor. So, sir. What says the Duke?

Mess. The matter of thy statement he hath weighed,
But finds no satisfaction to his doubts
In the strange story.

Lor. Well, what follows? He
Has doubts, and I must bleed for 't. Is it so?

Mess. If, ere the night be wasted, thou should'st fail
To bring the convict and Arsenio both
Before him living, he will lay their death
To your account; and, by the torture, force
Confession from the quivering lips of anguish.

Lor. Confession! Go, thou know'st me not; nor he
Who sent thee here. "If ye would frighten boys,
"Show them the whip." If ye would frighten cowards,
The rack may do it: but a man whose heart
Is set in firmer casing, smiles at death.
Torture, ye may—ye cannot frighten him.
So tell the Duke from me.

Mess. I will obey you.

[*Exit* Messenger.

Lor. "My dream is out."
The murdered man told true;
And the night shadow that forewarned my fall,

Spoke with a tongue of meaning. " Fearful shade!
" Most like to death; I'll meet thee in the grave,
" And there confess what in this world I dare not."
Ha! Julio, welcome, though it be to tell me
My hour is come. Speak!

Enter Julio.

Jul. 'Tis not that; but worse
Than that which brings me.
Lor. Wherefore this delay
To utter it? I am no prosperous fool,
Who shudders at the sound misfortune makes.
I wear a mailed horror round my heart,
Not to be pierced or shaken.
Jul. Hear it then.
Thy wife is foul belied; accused of murder,
Even of her father's murder!
Lor. How! her father's!
My wife accused!—She must be justified,
Though on the snow of her pure innocence
I perish. " Here the struggle ends for ever.
" Thy heralds, Fate, are many, but this last
" Hath borrowed thine own voice."
Jul. What wouldst thou do?

Lor. "Encounter any thing to save Elmira."
Deliver up my foes; abash my friends;
Shake hands with horror; bid the world farewell;
And be a ruined voucher for her truth
And purity.

Jul. When, not expecting this,
She sent her blessing to thee as I came,
How would she bless thee now!

Lor. Methinks I hear
The sweetness of her disappointed voice
Call that vain blessing down:—But 'tis no time
For tenderness. Fling me thy brand, Despair,
The wretch's weapon, tempered in the fires
Of madness; that when justice dooms, and shame
Cries out against me, I may stand the shock;
Or die like an entangled lion, biting
The toils e'en with the gasp that ends my life.

Jul. Invoke some blessed power, and not the fiend
Despair, to help thee in extremity.
Arsenio may be moved.

Lor. The mountain flood
May be damm'd up by a word, if Heaven pronounce it;
And the declining sun struck back into
His high meridian seat by miracle:

When wonders like to those grow common, mercy
May find her way into Arsenio's breast;
But not till then.

Jul. His daughter, and thy wife,
Elmira, were a suitor to whose plea
His hate could not demur.

Lor. My wife plead for me!
She is the last on earth that I would have
Suspect my guilt, or know for what I pleaded.
But, that no chance be lost, fly to the castle,
Set free mine adversaries, and once more
Bid that Arsenio speak with me.

Jul. 'Tis well.
This way he passes to the Senate House,
And here shall meet thee. Yet, before we part,
One promise I would crave. "I know thy spirit
"Shrinks from the touch of scorn, and values life
"No longer than 'tis honoured: I have fears."

Lor. What fears?

Jul. That if Arsenio should persist,
And, spite of nature, still be deaf to mercy,
This parting, O! my friend, may be our last!

Lor. And couldst thou wish to see me after?

Jul. Once.

Lor. "But once?"

Jul. " Once, at all hazards."

Lor. Then I'll meet thee
In open Senate, though the shame should burn
My cheeks into the bone. So thrive my soul
Hereafter, as I keep this vow.

Jul. I thank thee;
And now, in haste, farewell. [Julio *attempts to go.*

Lor. " Farewell! yet hold:
" I cannot part thee even for a moment
" On such light terms. Methinks, to say farewell,
" Like travellers dividing on a road
" Where pleasant prospects rise, and the sun shines,
" Befits not our condition. We are severed
" By wind, and rain, and in a troubled sea,
" And under night; and as the scene is awful,
" The parting should be solemn. One embrace:
" It may——but 'tis no matter—heaven be with thee!"

[*Exeunt severally;* Julio *into one adjoining cell.*

SCENE II.

The Chamber in the Senate House.

Enter the Duke *and* Elmira.

Elm. Where are my chains? where is the rack to end me?

Duke. None are intended, lady. None deserved.

Elm. If thou suspect my soul of such a crime,
Why spare the mortal part? If thou would'st brand
My name with such a charge, why make a show
Of mercy, and forbear the slighter wound,
When thou hast aimed the greater?

Duke. Hear the cause;
But hear it; then upbraid me, if thou canst.

Elm. That I was torn from my own wretched home
At thy command — that here I stand thy prisoner,
And soon may be thy victim; this is all
I know, or care to know. Therefore to judgment.

Duke. I pity the disorder of thy grief,
Which still arrests my tongue; but if thou'lt grant
An ear of patience to my brief discourse,
I'll point thee out such reason for the act,
As shall thy praise ensure.

Elm. Ha! praise! for what?
An act of outrage?

Duke. No; of kindness, lady;
Restoring thy lost father.

Elm. Mock me not;
I have lost every thing.

Duke. What if thy seizure,
The very injury of which thou speak'st,

Hath to Lorenzo's heart appealed with force —
With gentle force — and that to rescue thee
From such imagined peril, he should break
Thy father's bonds, and give him back to freedom,
Where was the cruelty of that pretence
Which led to such deliverance?

Elm. I fear
My brain 's unsettled: a distracting light
Breaks in to summer hope, — and then confound.
Heard I aright? Said'st thou my father lived,
And was restored by my Lorenzo's love,
And that my seizure led to this? O say so!
In pity, swear it; speak, I will be dumb,
But let me hear thee loud.

Duke. 'Tis yet uncertain,
Though like to be.

Elm. Uncertain!

Duke. But still probable.

Elm. No more; why then disturb a wretch, prepared
To meet the worst, with vain imaginations?

Duke. I hold them not as vain, but well consenting,
And nigh to happen. That Arsenio lives
I little doubt; that thy Lorenzo bears
A bosom full of thee, is the belief
On which my honest artifice proceeded.

If he do love thyself, he loves thy fame;
He loves thy life; and thinking both in danger,
Whate'er his sullen purpose, it will bend
And break, if harm seem but to threaten thee.

Elm. And is 't for this I am accused?

Duke. For this.

Elm. I bless thee, and the well-intended wrong;
I bless thee, though I tremble; for a sad
Foreboding bids my soul take no delight in 't.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Julio attends your Grace, and with him brings
A prisoner guarded.

Elm. And my father, too?
Brings he my father?

Mess. That himself must answer.

[*Exit* Messenger.

Enter Julio.

Elm. O! Julio, say——

Jul. I left him with Lorenzo,
To follow soon.

Elm. Then I am loved indeed,
And happy in such love,—but are they friends?

Jul. Demand no more,—conjecture cannot move

'Till they are present. With his Highness now
My business is to say Arsenio lives,
And thou art free. With what intent Lorenzo
Hath done as he hath done, boots not to know,—
But, at the gate, Alfero waits his sentence,
If mercy be not shown.

Duke. 'Tis not an hour
Since further proof hath reached us of his crimes;
A treasonous correspondence with the foe
Detected, stifles mercy,—he must die
By instant execution. [*Exit* Duke.

Elm. O! my friend,
This is a fearful night!

Jul. More than thou think'st of—
But death befriends us—for that wretch's fate
Secures Lorenzo, if thy father spare him.

Elm. My father spare my husband! Sure I dream,
And not on earth; the horrid sounds I hear
Are from the spirit of evil.

Jul. Nay—be firm;
Nor let it shake thee to be told, thy husband
May need thy bended knees to save his life.

Elm. If to lie prostrate in the grave could add
One hour to his existence, I am ready:—
But whence this apprehension?

Jul. From Arsenio.

Elm. I'm glad thou hast not called that man my father,
Who persecutes my love,—but how from him?

Jul. He may—I know not if he will—but dread it;
He may accuse Lorenzo: should he breathe
The accusation forth, my friend is sworn
Not to survive the shame.

Elm. O hold, my heart,
For one great effort! Come—the Senate sits,
Thither will I this instant.

Jul. Canst thou trust
Thy strength so far?

Elm. I feel a dreadful strength,
Past nature, equal to necessity,
Like that of gods or fiends: methinks I could
Strive with the vigorous hand which fights confusion
Upon the border of the elements,
And keeps creation safe. I'll snatch my husband—
The power is here, in arms; I'll snatch him from
An host of foes, though they be fathers all. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A Chamber in the Senate House.

Enter the Duke *and a* Senator.

Duke. Anon the Senate will in council meet
Touching this matter: meanwhile thou acquaint
Our venerable brothers with the strange
Disclosure of the dying man.

Sen. Most truly.

Duke. Elmira here again!

Sen. I take my leave.

[*Exit* Senator.

Enter Elmira *and* Julio.

Elm. Oh! good my lord, behold once more a suitor,
Who looks to thee for hope.

Duke. I grieve, Elmira,
To see thee here,—but justice should not bend
In deference to soft humanity.
Thus then in brief: Alfero's dying words
Accuse Lorenzo of thine uncle's death
By poison.

Elm. Mighty Heaven! sustain me still!
My sight—my sight is clouded!

[*Falling into* Julio's *arms.*

Jul. Pray your grace
Defer all comment till another time;
You see she cannot bear it.

Elm. Yes, I can—
I can—and will! Some in their sex find help,
The attribute of manhood aiding them—
Some in the wisdom and control of years;
Some have a kind sustaining in their tempers,
Not prone to feel; but I, a woman, weak,
And young, and used to melt at other's woe,
Have none of these: yet have I some dependence,—
It is on Heaven, and on the desperate wrongs
That give a desperate courage. Here I stand—
The rock is in my bosom. Here I stand,
Firm in the cause of justice and my husband.

Duke. Thou canst not speak of that thou dost not know.

Elm. Thou should'st not judge of that thou hast not heard.
I say my husband's innocent; his face
Attests it: then his known humanity;
And, above all—his love, are witnesses

Worth troops of swearers. Let his actions speak,—
If that indeed you look for truth,—not vengeance,—
And mean to punish,—not to sacrifice.
Was he a murderer who spared my father,
His deadliest foe? Was he a murderer
Who spared the very tongue that hath belied
His fame?—Again: Was he a murderer
Who stooped to own a tender influence
When all your terrors failed! and having laughed
Your racks and wheels to scorn, bowed down before
The image of affection, and surrendered?
But wherefore do I prate! Who made the charge?
A felon!—Where? Upon the wheel! You thought him
Unfit to live, and sent him to the grave!
Will you not thrust his slander after him?

Duke. Here comes Arsenio; he may tell us more.

Enter Arsenio.

Duke. Arsenio, my good friend!

[*Takes him by the hand.*

Ar. Your highness' servant.

Elmira too! (*seeing her*). Come to thy father's arms!

Elm. Yes, to his heart. Oh! how I joy to see thee!
My father! hush—a little forward—hush!

[*Leads him to the front of the Stage.*

This court of curs'd hypocrisy and falsehood
Would rob me of all earthly happiness
Under a vile pretext. But thou art kind
And good, and wilt not countenance the fraud.
They would condemn Lorenzo!
Ar. Ha! thank Heaven!
Their justice runs before me. I have spurned
The villain's plea, and left him with the guards,
Here to be dragged for justice!
Elm. But a moment;
Grant me one moment's conference in private.
The Duke will not refuse.
Duke. What wouldst thou ask?
Elm. To be alone.
Duke. We would be just, not cruel,
And, therefore, leave you to commune awhile
Before Lorenzo comes. From thee, Arsenio,
We dread no weak compliance. When the guards
Conduct him hither, let him here remain
'Till we return; that if his crime be clear,
Our sentence be not slow to visit him. [*Exit* Duke.
Ar. Elmira!
Elm. Father!
Ar. I can feel for thee

Most deeply: nay, I do: but for that man,
Whose name shall never more escape these lips,
'Tis vain to plead.

Elm. Not so — When he and I
Have but one life, and thou hast means to save it —
I pray thee, in the name of child, of daughter, —
The tenderest name of child, — to change thy purpose.

Ar. I hear, and own the tender name thou utter'st,
But to the rest am deaf. Nay, if an angel,
Clothed in the light of Heaven, had kneeled to me,
Revenge should be my answer. Therefore spare
Thy unavailing tears.

Elm. Another time!
Another time! Destroy him not — not now!
A bridegroom but this evening! Let him see
To-morrow.

Ar. In another world he may.

Elm. So cruel?

Ar. Say — so steadfast.

Elm. Call it what
Thou wilt, 'tis parricide: — but go, pursue
Thy dreadful aim: join hate to hate, and kill him.
For, by that Heaven, whose mercy thou blasphem'st,
If but a word escape thee to the harm;

Nay, or a look, to the disgrace of him
I call my husband, this [*drawing a dagger*].— Ay,
tremble now —
This dagger drinks my blood.

Ar. What would thy madness?

Elm. That I have said. Keep off: a stir, and I—
Am nothing. Hark! "I hear his chains." Pronounce
My fate before he comes.

Ar. Look! [*kneeling*] on my knees ——

Elm. Break not my heart, but rise.

[*As she attempts to raise him, she drops the dagger, and he seizes it.*

Ar. Thus fortune aids me
To vindicate a brother's death, and wreak
My vengeance on a dark assassin!

Elm. No! ——
Thou hast, indeed, possessed thee of the steel,
The present means of dying; but thou hast not
The operation in thy corporal hand
To stop the soul's resolve. Then hear my vow: —
If he should fall through thee, or with thine aid,
Despair shall keep a solemn lent within me!
Nor food, nor drink, shall pass those lips, 'till death
Arrive, to occupy the house of famine
With its chill pomp.

Ar. Ha! sworn to starve! Elmira!
O! thou who mad'st me father, look upon me!
Thou mad'st me too a brother, by thy will,
And gav'st me once to love him; now to hate
His blood-stained enemy. Shall I not use
My power to blast this scorpion from my path!
O tell me what to do, if thou art nigh!
Shall I not hail revenge? 'Tis sweet! — But then —
My daughter, in the midst of plenty, starving!
Revenge is not my child! She is my child!
And she shall guide her father, blind with passion,
And find him out repose. [*Embraces her.*

Elm. Heaven! — Heaven will bless thee!

Enter Julio, *followed by* Lorenzo.

Jul. Lorenzo comes.

Elm. My husband! — Welcome! welcome!

Lor. Elmira! sweet Elmira! there is yet
One joy 'twixt me and ruin.

Elm. And that joy
To last through life. Hang not thy head, my father!
Look how he smiles forgiveness.

Lor. 'Tis too late.

Elm. There is no time too late for happiness.

Lor. Poor sufferer! — Happiness!

Elm. Is it not here?

Lor. O! could I turn thy heart to stone, thy veins
To lines of marble, where no moisture flows,
But damps that never warm, and never feel!
T'were mercy thus to change thee.

Elm. Yes; I see —
I see it now. Thy cheeks are pale, thy limbs
Are trembling. Let me look upon thee! Nearer!
Hast thou done this thyself?

Lor. What could I do?
Accused, reviled; denied all hope of mercy,
I drank a healing draught, whose sweetest drop
Was that which tasted of oblivion!

Elm. Ha! poisoned! Let me catch thee to my soul!
And, with an arm of madness, hold thee down
To life, while Death and I dispute for thee!
The venom shall not kill. [*She swoons.*

Lor. Help me to hold her!
For I am weaker than your racks could make me.

Ar. Look up, my child! [*Supporting her.*

Lor. How my blood boils! my sinews
Crack in the fiery trial. Ha! she wakes.

Elm. Hush — do not tell my father we are going
To die together, for he has no child
But me. Lorenzo — are my senses gone?

Oh, no,—they struggle with realities.
Come, then, my fainting husband, lean upon
Thy wedded bosom—let it be thy grave—
'Tis cold enough. Yet, e'er we sink to rest,
Confront those men—declare thine innocence.

Lor. My innocence!

Elm. Thy purity from blood.

Lor. I care not what they say.

Elm. But grant to me
The bitter consolation, to be sure
Thou suffer'st wrongfully.

Lor. I must not.

Elm. How!
Are we more wretched than I thought?

Lor. Our woes
Have no alleviation.

Elm. Is it so?
Then welcome to the worst.

Lor. Oh! for a spell
To shrink and wither up the size of time,
That when my shame begins, the world might end,
And life, extinct in all its properties,
Forget to scorn me.

Elm. Is it possible?

Lor. Demand no more.

Elm. I would not—'tis enough—
My heart is broken—Oh! my love, my husband,
Let us steal up to heaven together—there
My arms shall fold thee, and my voice plead for thee.
Nay—closer—'tis so dark—Oh! mercy, mercy!

[*She dies.*

Ar. Leave not thine aged father to endure
The world alone. Look! is it death that wraps her?
Speak once again—but once—'tis all I ask.
No sound! no motion! Then 'tis vain to pray;
And all my hope is, now, to follow thee.
Elmira! must I say farewell? My child!

Lor. Dead! dead already! and she drank no poison!
But that which shoots its venom thro' the mind—
My crime hath killed her. "I forgot one kiss—
"The last." Rinaldo, thou art well revenged!
Thy ghost may sleep at midnight—For my wife,
And I, are hastening to a bridal bed
Thou need'st not envy—Let the grave protect us!

[*Dies.*

[*Curtain falls to slow Music.*]

THE END.

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EPILOGUE,

WRITTEN BY A FRIEND, AND SPOKEN BY MRS. EDWIN.

TREMBLING behind the scenes, 'twixt hope and fear,
Our agitated Author sends me here;
And, while he sits involved in doubtful gloom,
Through *me*—from *you* his judges—asks his doom.
But, ere your judgment on his fate you give,
One *hint* from ME I beg you to receive;
His *offspring 's* YOUNG—it is his FIRST indeed,
And should it by your warm applause succeed,
In each succeeding year, I do assure ye,
His LITTLE ONES will find their way to Drury:
But if in infancy your frigid pow'r
Should nip the bud and blast the rising flow'r,
Parent and child, opposed against the storm,
Without a *friend* to raise, or *Sun* to warm,
Must sink unheeded, 'mid rude winter's ire;
Neglected wither, and unknown expire.
But why these strains? *my* FORTE, you know, is spirit,
Change not to *tragic* drone my *comic* merit—
As you must do, if you compel me now,
With lengthen'd face, and deep contracted brow,

To tell him he has *fail'd*—poor devil, he
Could never more with pleasure look at me;
But, if consulting character, you choose,
To make *me* bearer of the pleasant news,
That he is safe; the part is rightly *cast;*
Where *mirth* pervades, I hope I'm not the last:
For *my* sake then, as well as his, be kind,
And if to spare no better cause you find,
Relax the frown that critic wisdom wears,
When from ambition's brow the wreath she tears,
And deigning to approve, conclude our cause,
With gentle mercy, speaking in applause.
That sweet applause, whose music charms *us* more,
Than did *Apollo's* lute the Gods of yore!
For whose loud thunder, *Writers*, *Actors* vie;
Then lend your hands, and let it swell on high,
While to our Author with the news I fly!

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